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THE MORAL LIFE OF THE HEBREWS

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By

J. M. Powis Smith

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
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PREFACE

This book undertakes to present a history of the development of Hebrew morals as recorded in the Old Testament. That there was a historical development none can well deny. The aim here is to present that history as objectively as possible. The facts are for the most part left to speak for themselves. The literary sources containing the record of this moral progress are treated in the probable order of their origin.

The presentation might have been made more vivid and vital if space had permitted a closer integration of the moral practices and ideals with the contemporary social and economic conditions amid which they functioned. The social aspects of ethical problems and situations have not been wholly ignored. But there is still need of, and room for, a good scientific handbook on the sociology of the Hebrews.

The Hebrew point of view always coupled morals with religion. They were one and inseparable. The outstanding characteristic of Hebrew religion is the fact that it gave free course to the moral forces latent within it. None of the Hebrew thinkers ever separated morals from religion. It was the moral passion of the Hebrew religion that gave it its dynamic. Ethics and theology advanced together, each supporting the other. The great contribution of the prophets was that they ethicized the religion of their people. Their crowning achievement was ethical monotheism.

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The charge of utilitarianism may be made against Hebrew ethics with some force. But this is a necessary stage in the development of any system of morals. One of the earliest human motives is the desire for success and prosperity; and it is a proof of profound spiritual insight when a people's leaders use this desire in such a way as to further moral ends. But the Hebrew saints outgrew this primary stage in their ethical training and came to the point where they loved the moral life for its own sake and were willing to risk their lives in defense of their characters. The moral achievement of a people, or of an individual, is to be measured not merely by the goal at which it arrives, but also from the point at which it starts. The distance won in the struggle is the test of moral stamina. Nothing is more noteworthy than the great progress made by the Hebrews in their thousand years of moral discipline. It is doubtful if any people ever traveled farther in so short a time. No moralist need apologize for the ethics of the Old Testament. Read in the light of history, the story of the Hebrew moral life is one of constantly expanding ideals, with the slow and heavy movement of the masses being constantly stimulated by the spur of noble-minded leadership. These men of spiritual insight still point the way of moral attainment to us who would search for the same great ends. The social passion of the prophets, the moral discernment of the sages, and the spiritual vision of the psalmists still challenge admiration. The words and deeds of these men have not lost their power. They will always stir the minds and inspire the hearts of lovers of righteousness.

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PART I

THE MORALS OF PRE-PROPHETIC ISRAEL

CHAPTER I

THE EARLIEST HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

1. *The aim of Part I.*—The term "pre-prophetic" as here understood is applied to that period of Hebrew history which preceded the work of the great prophets of the eighth century B.C., viz., Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. No attempt is made here to arrange the literary sources of information for that period in chronological order. Any such arrangement is necessarily largely determined by subjective considerations and fails to command general assent. Nor is any effort made to follow the course of historical events within the period at all closely; for the problems besetting the study of the history of this period are too numerous, too complex, and too recently discovered to make any general agreement upon these matters possible at present. Our aim, in any case, is to set forth the ethical standards reflected in the body of literature that comes from this early period of Hebrew history; and that literature for the most part belongs to the latter end of the period in question. It records much of the ethical practices and ideals of more ancient times, but it rarely fails to make clear its own moral judgment upon those times either by direct statement or by inference; and it is this evaluation of this early literature with which we must satisfy ourselves. This means that we shall not expect to learn what were the moral aims and motives of an Abraham, a Jacob, or even a Moses, but rather look for the standards reflected in the stories about them as they were current

in the closing century of the pre-prophetic period. For convenience of treatment the literature of this period is here classified in three groups of documents, to wit: (1) the oldest historical material in Judges, Samuel, and I Kings; (2) the ancient traditions recorded in the J and E documents of the Hexateuch; and (3) the earliest Hebrew codes of law.

2. *The fluidity of early Hebrew ethics.*—It should be noted first of all that the moral standards of this early period were in part an inheritance from a pre-Canaanitish nomadic life in the desert and in part the product of the succeeding life amid the agricultural and commercial civilization of Canaan. But these two types of life must not be thought of as lying on either side of a chronological line of demarcation. On the contrary, the fact is that, for a century or two, in all probability, the life in Canaan was kept in closest contact with the life fresh from the desert. That is to say, the settlement of Israel in Canaan was a long-drawn-out process rather than a single dramatic experience. Some Hebraic clans found entry into Palestine at least as early as the Tel-el-Amarna period (i.e., the fourteenth century B.C.), and if Hebrew traditions may be trusted, some came in a few centuries earlier. These early comers were reinforced from time to time by new instalments from the desert. But the last lot of immigrants did not arrive until the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the twelfth century B.C. These were the clans who escaped from Egypt and with other groups took possession of Judah and the south. All this means that the customs and ideals of the old settlers in Canaan were from time to time brought face to face with the standards of the simpler life of the desert

as represented by the latest comers from that quarter. Inevitably such a situation involves a conflict of customs and aims which tends to keep social and individual ideals in a state of flux. Such conditions are not favorable to a rapid crystallization of practice and a speedy fixation of standards.

3. *A change of environment.*—The conditions amid which the early Hebrew life in Canaan was carried on need to be borne in mind as we survey the crude ethical practices of this period. The Hebrews were newcomers in the midst of an old civilization of which they themselves knew scarcely anything. There was more or less hostility all the time, and much of the time open warfare, between them and their Canaanitish neighbors, who did not welcome these intruders. They had to learn an almost wholly new manner of life in Canaan. The economic conditions of the desert and the nomad no longer obtained. With so much new to be learned and so much of the old to be unlearned, it ought not to be surprising if their earlier moral and social standards should break down to some extent, before new social customs and institutions had been developed to replace them. The Hebrews coming in from the simple life of the nomad in the desert were confronted by all the limitations and trials that a rich and highly developed culture presents to primitive people. They were like the country boy coming to earn his living in the big city; it will either make or break him. It naturally required time for the Hebrews to adjust themselves to the new environment and to learn to use it wisely and not abuse it. The wonder is not that there is so much of the crude and primitive and sensuous in the morals of early Israel,

but that the soul of the people persisted in seeking after the higher things and gradually shook off these lower materialistic habits and developed for itself a moral life that has held the admiration of mankind. It would have been so much simpler and easier to have sunk to the level of their Canaanitish neighbors!

4. *A lack of social unity.*—Still another aspect of the situation must be mentioned. The struggle for the complete possession of the land was long drawn out. It might be better to say the struggles, for the process of conquest was not carried on in any unified way. There was no massing of the Israelites as a whole against the Canaanites. It was rather a piecemeal process. Each clan or group of clans made its own way and fought its own fight. The story of the migration of the Danites told in Judges, chapters 17 and 18, is an illustration of the way in which the clans obtained their foothold. There was thus no recognized authority over all Israel until the days of the Kingdom under Saul. Each group was a law unto itself. Indeed, a later writer describing the life of the period says, "each man did that which was right in his own eyes."[1] There was no pronounced and authoritative public sentiment throughout all Israel to act as a controlling influence upon the conduct of smaller groups and of individuals. Then, too, the organization of the clan itself which had been worked out under nomadic conditions would have to undergo radical transformation under the agricultural conditions of the life in Canaan and many of the old customs and restrictions would be forced to give way; and that, too, before the newer life had fully worked out its own means of social

[1] Judg. 17:6; 21:5.

control. Such a general situation furnishes an ideal background for cunning, trickery, deceit, and violence, and these unsocial phenomena are present in abundance.

5. *The morals of Yahweh.*—In presenting the ethical materials found in the oldest sources in Judges, Samuel, and I Kings, we may well consider first of all the ethical attitudes ascribed to Yahweh, Israel's God. It is a generally recognized fact that men first work out among themselves their own rules of procedure and ideals of conduct, and then find sanction for them in the mind of God. Men first become ethical themselves; then they cease to think unethically of God. Consequently, to discover the accepted standards of an age or a group, we need only examine its conception of God, for it will reflect most of the higher ideals of his worshipers.

The conception of Yahweh in early Israel was not rich in ethical content. The stories in the oldest documents credit him with sentiments and purposes that are very human, and indeed in some cases, quite inhuman, as judged by modern standards. He does not shrink from resorting to the use of wicked agencies in order to bring to pass his purposes. We are told, for example, that "God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, so that the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech" (Judg. 9:23 f.). All the destruction and slaughter that followed were brought about by God in order that the law of blood-revenge might be satisfied (cf. Judg. 9:56 f.). In similar fashion, the wickedness of the sons of Eli was in accordance with the divine plan, "because Yahweh would slay them" (I Sam. 2:25). Saul's malady was due to "an evil spirit from Yahweh" (I Sam. 16:15 ff.), which pushed him to

the point of attempting to murder David (I Sam. 19:9). David's census of all Israel was inspired by Yahweh and yet it angered Yahweh that David should have yielded to his suggestion (II Sam. 24:1 ff.). Samuel is advised by Yahweh to camouflage his visit to Bethlehem for the purpose of finding a new king by declaring that he goes there in order to conduct a sacrifice (I Sam. 16:2). David conceives it to be quite within the range of possibility that Yahweh should have stirred up Saul to seek his life. But in that case Yahweh ought to accept an atoning sacrifice and be satisfied. However, "if it be men that have stirred thee up [i.e., Saul] against me, cursed be they before Yahweh" (I Sam. 26:19). That is to say, what would have been perfectly legitimate for Yahweh is cursedly immoral for men. Yahweh is above all law. Yahweh makes the treacherous council of Hushai to prevail with Absalom in order that his rebellious enterprise may fail (II Sam. 17:14). Yahweh raises up enemies against Solomon to punish him for his recognition of other gods (I Kings 11:14, 23).

6. *The personal responsibility of Yahweh for deeds of blood.*—Not only does Yahweh work out his purposes through evil agencies, but at times he takes matters into his own hands. He smote seventy men of Beth-shemesh for their sacrilegious curiosity in looking into the sacred ark (I Sam. 6:19). Uzzah was slain on the spot by Yahweh for his profane touch upon the ark, even though it was an involuntary act due to his desire to keep the ark from injury (II Sam. 6:6, 7). Nabal, the churlish farmer who refused David's request for a material reward, was smitten of Yahweh so that he died, though from our point of view David had little moral right to demand pay

for having kept his men from molesting Nabal's flocks and herds (I Sam. 25:38). Yahweh's insistence upon the satisfaction of blood-revenge was so pronounced that he sent a famine upon all Israel because Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites had not been avenged. Seven of Saul's descendants were handed over to the Gibeonites and were hung up before Yahweh in Gibeah; then his wrath was placated (II Sam. 21:1–14). Indeed, Yahweh seems to have had a craving for blood, according to the thought of these times. Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh at the altar (I Sam. 15:32 f.). When Jephthah made his rash vow and his eyes met the desolating sight of his only child coming forth from his house to greet him upon his return from victory, there was no thought of any possibility of escape from the fulfilment of the literal terms of the vow, and in due course the young woman was sacrificed to Yahweh (Judg. 11:30–40). The same rigid adherence to the terms of an unwise vow nearly cost Jonathan his life at the hands of his fanatical father (I Sam. 14:24–45). The fact that the people protested and saved the hero of the day is evidence of a developing ethical sense. On this occasion, common sense and gratitude won a straight victory over tradition and dogma.

7. *Oaths, curses, and vows.*—Another way in which the God-idea throws light upon ethical conceptions is in the matter of oaths, curses, and vows. A man takes an oath in order that confidence in his integrity may be reinforced by bringing the whole contract under the protection of Yahweh. It is clear that he himself may not be trusted to fulfil his word or to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. Therefore he must put himself

under bonds to keep his word. If he fails, the wrath of Yahweh will descend upon him with appalling results. The fear of this holds him true to his pledge (Judg. 11:10, 11; 21:1–18; I Kings 8:31 f.). An interesting illustration of the effectiveness of such a fear is furnished in the story of the man Micah who stole a large sum of money from his mother (Judg. 17:2 f.). The mother, perhaps suspecting her son, uttered a curse upon the thief in her boy's presence. The fear of that curse so worked upon his conscience that he confessed the crime and restored the money, in order to escape the penalty of the malediction. Another curse that is instructive is the one already mentioned which Saul uttered on the day of battle. Jonathan unwittingly violated its terms and Yahweh at once manifested his displeasure by refusing to respond to Saul's efforts to secure an oracle as to the further course of the campaign (I Sam. 14:36 ff.). Jonathan was innocent of any evil intent, but the curse must operate just the same. The people were here more ethical in their reaction than the priests and the king. Still another vow is that by which Hannah succeeds in persuading Yahweh to grant her a child. The child is to be dedicated to Yahweh as a Nazirite as long as he lives (I Sam. 1:11). As a reward for this surrender of her son, Hannah is given five more children (I Sam. 2:20). This is a very simple and human interpretation of the situation on the part of the record. In another situation, in which a great oath was taken by the men of Israel that none of them would give the surviving men of Benjamin any of their daughters to wife, the oath was evaded by a bit of Jesuitical reasoning which kept the letter of the oath but broke the spirit

of it all to bits. They told the Benjamites where and when they could seize some unsuspecting maidens whose fathers were not informed of the proposed raid. Therefore, nobody *gave* his daughter to a Benjamite husband and the letter of the oath was conserved (Judg. 21:1–22).

8. *Yahweh is true to his word.*—Two more cases exhaust the material in these sources that offers information as to the ethical side of the idea of God. When the tribe of Dan was migrating to its new home in the north, it stopped on the way for a call upon Micah of Ephraim, from whom they took, despite his protest, not only his family priest, but also his god. This stolen image was installed in the new shrine at Dan and was ministered to by the kidnapped priest. Yahweh, notwithstanding this burglary, seems to have accepted the service of the robbers and the use of the stolen goods without protest, and to have prospered Dan in its mission of extermination (Judg., chaps. 17 and 18). The second episode reflects a little light in our ethical darkness. After Saul had aroused the wrath of Yahweh by failing to carry out his orders as to the Amalekites, Saul is brought to realize the gravity of his offense by Samuel and begs for forgiveness. But he is met by a stern denial, and the content of the refusal puts Yahweh upon a higher level than he has occupied thus far: "The Glory of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not man that he should repent" (I Sam. 15:29). The contrast here is between the deceit and fickleness of man and the integrity and steadfastness of God. When God has announced a course of action, he can be depended upon to adhere to it.

9. *The Hebrew attitude toward foreigners.*—We turn now from consideration of the ethical aspect of the idea

of God to observation of the ethical relations among men. First of all we shall take up the attitude of Israel and the Israelites toward foreign nations and individuals. Here it will at once appear that a foreigner has few rights that an Israelite is bound to respect. The ordinary claims of humanity are largely ignored in dealings with non-Israelite groups and individuals. Particularly is this true of Israel's attitude toward Canaanites. When Israel became sufficiently strong, the Canaanites were reduced to slavery (Judg. 1:28; I Kings 9:20 f.). A defeated king was mutilated (Judg. 1:6). The whole population of Laish was taken by surprise and ruthlessly slaughtered (Judg. 18:7 ff., 27). The Song of Deborah (Judg., chap. 5; cf. chap. 4) revels in a fierce joy over the downfall of the foe and gives Jael the highest praise among women for her assassination of Sisera. The prose narrative of the same event intensifies the savagery of the deed by adding the fact that Jabin was a friend of Jael's husband, so that Sisera had every right to expect kindly treatment at Jael's tent. Worse still, Jael admitted him to her tent, gave him refreshing drink, thus bringing him under the protection of the guest law, and yet murdered him in his sleep. The prose narrative is generally held to be later than the poem and it seems to reflect a fading out of consciousness of the old guest rights of the desert. David put whole communities to the edge of the sword that were friendly to the Philistines, and then went back to Gath and lied barefacedly to Achish as to the territory in which his campaigns had been conducted (I Sam. 27:9–11). Amalekites and Moabites were ruthlessly slaughtered (I Sam. 15:3, 8, 32, 33; II Sam. 8:2) and Ammonites were reduced to slavery (II Sam.

12:31). At an earlier day, Ehud assassinated Eglon, king of Moab, an oppressor of Israel, and was evidently regarded as a hero by his people for so doing (Judg., chap. 3). But gratitude toward the Kenites for past favors led Israel to spare them from the slaughter of the Amalekites with whom they dwelt (I Sam. 15:6). Sporadically there were periods when kindly feelings seem to have prevailed between Israel and Moab. At least, when David fled from Saul, he left his aged parents under the protection of the king of Moab, before betaking himself to refuge in the cave of Adullam (I Sam. 22:3, 4). And more surprising still, perhaps, when David's fortunes were at a low ebb and he was abandoning his own capital before the advance of his rebel son, the king of the Ammonites gave him kindly succor (II Sam. 17:27–29). With Solomon, leagues with foreign peoples became the rule rather than the exception, a *quid pro quo* being the basis of agreement (I Kings 5:5–11; 10:25–29). Evidently the geographical position of Canaan, constituting as it did the great highway between the eastern and western centers of civilization, was effecting a change in the attitude of the erstwhile nomads, so that they were coming to recognize the necessity of coming to terms with their neighbors instead of living in a state of perpetual hostility in which every Hebrew's hand was lifted against every alien.

10. *Social solidarity.*—In turning our eyes upon the ethical attitudes and principles operative within the Israelitish circle, we shall at once discover that the conception of the relation of the individual to the social order was essentially different from the view of that relationship in our own age. For us, in theory at least, each

individual stands or falls upon his own merits. Our social order is individualistically organized. For the early Hebrews, the individual had only partially emerged from the social group within which he originated. The solidarity of the family or group was the outstanding fact. We shall therefore find group morality and family ethics functioning to a considerable extent instead of an individualistic ethic. In Judges, Samuel, and I Kings, there are but two or three clear cases of this sort of thing, but these are enough to attest the operation of the solidarity principle in early Israel, especially when we find further evidence in J and E (see chap. ii), and discover also that the principle continues in force to a considerable degree all through Hebrew and Jewish history. One of the illustrations of this conception is supplied by the story of the hanging of Saul's descendants (II Sam. 21:1–14). The offense of slaying the Gibeonites was committed by Saul or upon his orders. Yahweh sends punishment for the crime upon all Israel and that too after Saul's death. Final satisfaction is given the Gibeonites, and atonement for the crime is made by hanging up before Yahweh two of Saul's sons and five of his grandsons. The ends of justice are therefore met when the family of the offender is punished, even though the offender himself escape. Again, David's sin in taking a census of his people is visited upon the heads of the people and not upon David himself directly (II Sam. 24:1 ff.). In these cases the unit dealt with is not the individual, but the group to which he belongs. The individual involves the group in the results of his crime. The group has sinned through a member; therefore the group must suffer punishment. Nor is it at all essen-

tial that that member of the group who committed the offense be punished rather than some other member or members. The social body has offended and that body must suffer—the particular member of the body that suffers is a matter of slight consequence. When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.

11. *The conception of woman.*—An infallible index to the character of the society of any age is furnished by the life of its women and the esteem accorded to women and the family. On this subject there is considerable information in our sources. The names of Deborah, Jael, Hannah, Bathsheba, Michal, Abigail, Abishag the Shunammite, Tamar, the "Witch of Endor," and the "wise woman of Tekoa" bring up a wide range of pictures, pleasing and displeasing. Woman, apparently, played no small part in the social and even in the political life of the times. Nor were her morals appreciably different from the morals of masculine society. Polygamy was the order of the day. Samuel's mother was one of two wives (I Sam. 1:2); Gideon's father had "many wives" (Judg. 8:30); David had eight wives who are individually mentioned (I Sam. 18:20, 27; 25:39, 43; II Sam. 3:2–5, 13; 11:27; I Kings 1:1–4), and he married yet more wives in Jerusalem (II Sam. 5:13–16), and when he left Jerusalem in haste, fleeing from Absalom, he left ten concubines behind him in the city (II Sam. 15:16). Solomon's uxorious proclivities are notorious (I Kings 11:1–3). Of course, Solomon must be given credit for political and commercial aims to the accomplishment of which the marriages with foreign princesses were a necessary means. Inherent in the system of polygamy are certain evils which are exemplified in the family

life of this period. There was rivalry and enmity between the wives of Elkanah (I Sam. 1:5–8). The family tie among the children of different wives was very weak. Gideon's son Abimelech slew all but one of his half-brothers, seventy in number, and set himself up as king of Shechem (Judg. 9:5, 6). Amnon violated his half-sister Tamar and was slain for it by her full brother, Absalom (II Sam., chap. 13). Indeed he might have married her, half-sister as she was (II Sam. 13:13). Adonijah and Solomon were rivals for the succession to David's throne, and the younger won through the influence of the fascinating Bathsheba and the prophet Nathan (I Kings 1:11–40). Ultimately Adonijah was slain by Solomon under suspicion of plotting to seize the throne after David's death (I Kings 2:17–35). Faithfulness to the marriage bond did not weigh heavily upon husbands, and a general looseness of sexual relations prevailed. Samson seems to have contracted what is known as a *sadika* marriage with a Philistine woman (Judg. 15:1), i.e., a marriage by the terms of which the woman stays with her own people where she is visited from time to time by her husband, who makes sure of his welcome by bringing a present.[1] He visited a harlot at Gaza (Judg. 16:1) and appears to have suffered no blame; Jephthah's mother was a woman of similar record (Judg. 11:1). The sons of Eli are condemned for their relations with the women attendants of the shrine of Shiloh (I Sam. 2:22), though the precise ground of the censure is not clear. Abner is chided by Ishbosheth, Saul's son, for his relations with Rizpah, Saul's concubine;

[1] See W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (2d ed.), pp. 83–93.

Ishbosheth's objection, however, is based not upon moral, but upon political, grounds (II Sam. 3:7 f.); compare similar sentiments in the case of Absalom (II Sam. 16:21 f.), and of Adonijah (I Kings 2:17–25). A Levite's concubine is unfaithful to him and returns to her father's house, whither the Levite goes to bring her back with no indication of any severe condemnation (Judg. 19:2, 3). David's sin with Bathsheba is condemned indeed, but the ground of the condemnation is the wrong done to her husband, and not any wrong to Bathsheba or himself (II Sam., chap. 11). Under such circumstances, women as such seem to have had little consideration. Chivalry was an unknown quantity. One of the most glaring illustrations of this is the action of the old father in Gibeah who offered to turn his own virgin daughter over to the lust of the mob in order to save his guest, the Levite (Judg. 19:24). That same horrible story of outrage furnishes another testimonial to the inconsiderateness of the attitude toward women. The Levite's concubine, after a night of horror, crawled home to die on the threshold of her husband's lodging. When he opened the door in the morning, there she lay—dead. Under the circumstances a touch of sympathy at least might have been expected. But no! Not knowing that she was dead, the husband blurted forth a curt order, "Up, and let us be going!" The only ray of light in this moral darkness is the moral revulsion of "all Israel" when news of the outrage spread abroad (Judg. 19:26 ff.). Another set of experiences passed through by Michal, daughter of Saul, shows that women were mere pawns in the game of life. Michal fell in love with David (I Sam. 18:20–29) and, for ulterior motives, was given to him in marriage

by Saul. When Saul turned openly against David, he gave his daughter to Phalti, even though she was already David's wife (I Sam. 25:44). Later when David as king of Judah is approached by Abner with a view to giving David possession of the throne of northern Israel, David's first demand of Abner is that his wife Michal be restored to him (II Sam. 3:13). David's motive here is at least open to the suspicion of having been that of a politician rather than that of a devoted husband. Incidentally, the figure of Phalti, the bereft husband, accompanying his wife and "weeping as he went," is touching and demonstrative of the fact that true affection was not wholly unknown to husbands. But Michal had yet more to endure. When David so deported himself, at the time of the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem, as to shock Michal's sense of decency, which we need not suppose to have been highly developed, she ventured to tell David what she thought of him. In return for this she was apparently banished from David's presence for the rest of her life (II Sam. 6:20–23). Certainly, David's allusion to her father's failure was anything but tactful. The story of Jephthah's daughter reveals between the lines a true parental affection, compelled, however, to give place to the fear of God. In like manner, the record of Hannah bringing up little garments annually to her small son at Shiloh shows a mother's heart. David, too, reveals his love for his children unmistakably. Indeed, it overpowers his sense of justice and degenerates into weak partiality. He fails to punish Amnon for his dastardly crime, and his grief over Absalom outweighs all his sense of wrong. The outraged king is lost in the heartbroken father (II Sam. 18:29, 32 f.).

12. *Bloodshed.*—Turning from the intimacy of family affairs, we take up lastly the ethical relations among members of the general Hebrew public. The records of internecine wars are marred by deeds of savagery and brutality. Abimelech, when he took the rebellious city of Shechem, slew all the population, and "sowed the city with salt," and burned alive "about a thousand men and women" in a stronghold (Judg. 9:45, 49, 52). Through the envy and greed of Ephraim war broke out between Ephraim and Gilead in which forty-two thousand Ephraimites were slain—a figure slightly overdrawn, to be sure, but reflecting the savagery of the conflict (Judg. 12:1–6). The Israelitish army slew all the men, women, and children of Jabesh Gilead, with the exception of four hundred young virgins who were turned over as wives to the surviving Benjamites, because Jabesh Gilead had not joined in the common war against Benjamin (Judg. 21:10, 11). The bloody tragedy at Gibeon (II Sam. 2:12–17) was apparently due to treachery. Political murder was practiced without scruple. Saul slew the whole priestly group at Nob, men, women, and children, on suspicion of their being friendly to his enemy David (I Sam. 22:11–19). The whole house of Jeroboam was slain by Nadab (I Kings 15:29, 30); Zimri murdered Elah and all the house of Baasha (I Kings 16:9–12); and of the end of Tibni it is stated as a matter of course, "so Tibni died and Omri became king" (I Kings 16:22). Blood-revenge was in full swing and accounted for many deaths. The prominent cases on record are the murder of Abner by Joab in revenge for Abner's killing Asahel in war (II Sam. 3:22–27); David's slaughter of the murderers of Ishbaal (II Sam. 4:4–32); and Solomon's murder

of Joab (I Kings 2:5, 6, 28–34). Other cases of murder without any such justification are David's killing of Uriah in order to escape the detection of his sin with Uriah's wife (II Sam., chap. 11); Joab's murder of Amasa without provocation other than jealousy (II Sam. 20:9, 10); Saul's attack upon the Gibeonites (II Sam. 21:1); Solomon's slaying of Shimei (I Kings 2:36–46); and the stoning of Adoram the taskmaster by the Israelites (I Kings 12:18). David was saved from a massacre of Nabal and his retinue by the clever intervention of Abigail (I Sam., chap. 25); and Solomon would have killed Jeroboam could he have caught him (I Kings 11:40).

13. *Suicide.*—Brutality in the treatment of criminals is seen in David's treatment of the murderers of Ishbaal. Not satisfied with merely slaying them, he hung up their bodies and cut off their hands and their feet (II Sam. 4:5–12). With such low standards of the value of life and the dignity of personality as these, it is quite in keeping that suicide should be taken as a matter of course. The known cases are those of Saul and his armour-bearer (I Sam. 31:4), Ahithophel (II Sam. 17:23), and Zimri (I Kings 16:18). Saul regarded suicide as more honorable than death at the hands of the Philistines. These men were all offenders in one way or another against the principles and programs approved by our documents; and it may be, therefore, that suicide is regarded as self-confessed failure and self-condemnation which speaks for itself and need not be emphasized by the recorder. It is a fitting end for transgressors.

14. *Deceit and lies.*—Lying and deceit are so common in the oriental world even at the present time as to be

classified as near-virtues rather than as vices. Similar usage prevailed in the period covered by our sources. David deceived Abimelech, the priest of Nob, unmercifully. He assured him that he was on Saul's private business, of so urgent a character that he had had no time to provide himself with food and weapons, and that the escort which might have been expected to accompany a son-in-law of the king was sent on later to meet him at a rendezvous; all of which was pure fabrication and intended to mislead (I Sam. 21:1 ff.). David also deceived Uriah the Hittite and betrayed him to his death (II Sam., chap. 11). "The ruling passion" being "strong in death," he passed on to his son Solomon the task of compassing the death of Joab, his loyal supporter and friend, against whom he had not dared to lift his own hand; so also that of Shimei, the Benjamite, whom at a crucial moment he had sworn not to kill (I Kings 2:5, 6, 8, 9).[1] Jonathan deceived his father, Saul, because of his own love for David (I Sam.

[1] This last will and testament of David's in its present form is quite generally made a later addition to the record, and is disposed of as a libel upon David. The document doubtless has undergone some revision. But there is insufficient reason for treating it as wholly due to later imagination. We have three narratives of the life of David, viz., (1) I Chron., chaps. 1–11, (2) the Sm material in Samuel, (3) the Sl material in Samuel. A comparison of these lives, one with another, shows a steadily and rapidly developing idealization of David to have taken place. It is hardly likely that in the midst of such a development there should have originated a libel of this sort upon the ideal king. Further, the David of the oldest records suffers little from this account. He is already credited with deeds and attitudes which make those credited to him here pale into insignificance. It is better to let David carry this slight additional burden than to load it upon the back of some later writer living at a more civilized and moralized period.

20:1–10, 18–39; 23:17 ff.). Jezebel had no difficulty in obtaining false witnesses who swore away Naboth's life (I Kings, chap. 21).

15. *Drunkenness and immorality.*—Two other vices remain to be catalogued. Drunkenness seems to have been a common failing. How common it was may be seen from the story of Hannah at Shiloh (I Sam. 1:9–16). When Eli saw her engaged in silent prayer and in great stress of soul, he at once leaped to the conclusion that she was drunk. And that, too, notwithstanding that she was a woman and in the house of Yahweh. It is quite clear that drunkenness was a common spectacle at Shiloh; otherwise such an interpretation would never have been placed upon a good woman's devotions. Incidentally, both Eli and Hannah agree that it is a reprehensible practice. Religious feasts seem to have been occasions of heavy drinking. Absalom takes it for granted that at his feast of sheep-shearing Amnon will in due course be overcome with drink (II Sam. 13:28) and plans his murder accordingly. Another feast of sheep-shearing is better known, viz., that of Nabal the Calebite, who pastured his flocks in Carmel (I Sam., chap. 25). David, the head of a band of outlaws, sent emissaries to Nabal asking for gifts in view of the fact that David's band had not molested Nabal's property during the previous year. Nabal surlily refused the request. Thereupon David prepared to avenge the insult, but was met on his way to Nabal's farm by Abigail, the beautiful and winning wife of Nabal. She and her liberal gifts appeased the wrath of the passionate outlaw, and Nabal escaped impending destruction. But all the time that this protection of his life and goods

was being planned and carried out, Nabal was drinking himself dead drunk (I Sam. 25:36 f.). About ten days thereafter Nabal died, perhaps as a result of the dissipation. When word thereof was brought to David, he said, "Blessed be Yahweh," and straightway married the widow. In another case involving a woman, David plied her husband with drink without accomplishing his purpose (II Sam. 11:13). Elah, king of Israel, "was drinking himself drunk" when he was murdered by Zimri (I Kings 16:9). The second vice is one that has no precise equivalent in modern civilized society. Prostitution was practiced by both male and female hierodules under the protection of, and as a part of, religion and in the precincts of the shrines themselves. This was probably the function of the women concerned in the sin of the sons of Eli (I Sam. 2:22); and it is recorded that there were male prostitutes of this sort throughout Judah in Rehoboam's day (I Kings 14:24) and that they were finally abolished by King Asa (I Kings 15:12). This corruption of the moral and religious life of Israel was probably acquired from the sensuous worship of the Canaanites, whose gods and sanctuaries were readily adopted by the incoming Hebrews.

16. *Courage and generosity.*—The virtues that shine against this dark background, like stars on a moonless night, are not numerous. This is probably due in part to the fact that goodness is not "news." It may be taken for granted and, unless extraordinary at some point, is not likely to arouse interest or to impress itself deeply upon the memories of men. The ancient Hebrew world probably resembled our own age in this respect. We may therefore give them credit for a substantial body

of "good" people, who never did anything to make themselves notorious. They were measurably honest, paid their debts, were reasonably truthful, lovers of peace and order, and treated their neighbor's person and property with due respect. A criminal society cannot permanently exist. A few of the substantial virtues of early Israel come to the surface in our sources. Among a people engaged in war for generations, it goes without saying that courage and bravery would develop to a high pitch. Stories of personal daring would be treasured and passed on from generation to generation. We hear records of this sort in the case of Gideon's exploit (Judg. 7:19 ff.), of Jonathan and his armour-bearer routing the Philistines (I Sam. 14:6 ff.), of Samson with his insuperable strength and reckless courage (Judg., chaps. 14–16), of David slaying the lion and the bear and the Philistine giant (I Sam. 17:32 ff.) and venturing with one companion into the midst of Saul's camp (I Sam. 26:6 ff.), and of the wondrous deeds of David's heroes (II Sam. 23:8 ff.). With this quality of courage there sometimes went an admirable magnanimity. Saul's response to the appeal of Jabesh Gilead for help against the Ammonites was noble and generous (I Sam., chap. 11). Jonathan's unselfishness in supporting David to his own personal disadvantage is beyond question. David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan is a beautiful bit of memorial poetry and shows a large-mindedness that can forgive the past. Abner shrinks from killing an unarmoured man and urges Asahel to provide himself with mail (II Sam. 2:18–23), but in vain. Joab generously foregoes the glory of taking Rabbah from the Ammonites, and waits for David to appear and take it in person

(II Sam. 12:26 ff.). David himself, when his warriors at Bethlehem risked their lives to get him a drink of water, refused the drink procured at so great a price and sanctified their deed by pouring out the water as a drink offering to Yahweh (II Sam. 23:15 ff.).

17. *Hospitality.*—The courteous and generous hospitality of the old man at Gibeah to the wandering Levite and his concubine is introduced incidentally and as a matter of course, showing that there was nothing exceptional in it to the mind of the writer (Judg. 19:16 ff.). Saul's modesty in concealing the fact that Samuel had anointed him as king is characteristic of a strong and brave man (I Sam. 10:16; cf. 11:12 f., a later editorial note). When Saul was slain the men of Jabesh Gilead did not forget his help in their time of need but expressed their gratitude by making an all-night march to remove the bodies of Saul and Jonathan from the walls of Beth-shan upon which they were fastened, and give them decent burial (I Sam. 31:11 f.). In contrast with this, the men of Keilah whom David had delivered from the Philistines could not be trusted to refuse to betray him into the hands of Saul (I Sam. 23:5, 12). David thanked the men of Jabesh Gilead for their kindness to Saul and Jonathan, and promised to reward them (II Sam. 2:5–7). David himself met with kindness from many hands at the time of Absalom's rebellion and death. His hungry and thirsty troops were nourished by his friends (II Sam. 17:27–29), and David repaid this kindness as he had opportunity (I Kings 2:7). Ahimaaz, the runner, ran his best to get to David before the Cushite runner and to give him good news before the shock of Absalom's death should overwhelm him

(II Sam. 18:19 ff.). The people as a whole sympathized deeply with David in his grief (II Sam. 19:1 ff.).

18. *Friendship.*—Personal affection between one man and another, deepening into genuine love, is evident in the case of David and Jonathan. Even Saul loved David greatly upon first acquaintance (I Sam. 16:21). But David and Jonathan, according to an editorial note (I Sam. 18:1 ff.), loved one another at first sight so that "soul was knit with soul." This affection was severely tested on both sides, but held firm to the last. David's elegy exhibits a touch of genius in the expression of David's feelings:

> Jonathan, when thou didst die I was undone;
> I was afflicted for thee, my brother Jonathan.
> Thou wast very dear to me;
> Wonderful was thy love for me—
> Passing the love of women [II Sam. 1:25 f.].

This love of David's was abiding; it expressed itself after Jonathan's death in deeds of kindness to his children (II Sam. 4:9 ff.; 9:1–13).

19. *Justice.*—The sense of justice and right was strong, even if not highly developed. The whole institution of blood-revenge is an expression of it. The principle of "tit for tat" is clearly expressed in the account of Samuel's slaying of Agag (I Sam. 15:32 f.). Eli's sons, though priests, are charged with robbing the public as it came to sacrifice at Shiloh (I Sam. 2:12 ff.), and similar charges are preferred against the sons of Samuel in the exercise of their judicial capacity, in a later editorial note (I Sam. 8:1 ff.). Samuel himself, in a late Deuteronomic passage (I Sam. 12:3, 4), is made to give himself a clean bill of moral health in terms which are

perhaps ahead of Samuel's times. But that Samuel was a man of high moral standing as judged by the standards of his own age, there can be little doubt. The Deuteronomic tradition is probably well grounded. David refused to lay hands upon Saul on the ground that that was Yahweh's prerogative only, and that the just God would in his own way and time smite Saul for his sins (I Sam. 26:9–11). David is credited by an early editor (II Sam. 8:15) with having executed justice and judgment for all his people, though Absalom wins away the hearts of the people from David by administering justice more promptly than David and by doing so in person (II Sam. 15:1–6). The parable of the ewe lamb put into the mouth of Nathan is commonly thought to be somewhat later than David's time, but its essential principle that the rich must not add to their riches by robbing the poor is quite within the range of our period (II Sam., chap. 12). David's division of Mephibosheth's estate by giving half of it to his servant Ziba (II Sam. 19:29) shows a somewhat high-handed and arbitrary method, not wholly in accordance with justice as evinced by the existing record. Solomon's shrewdness in discovering the real facts of a case is illustrated by the story of the two women contending for a child (I Kings 3:16 ff.). The story of Ahab's seizure of Naboth's vineyard represents the protest of the Hebrew conscience against the encroachments of a despotic king upon the rights of a Hebrew freeholder, and leaves no doubt as to the condemnation heaped upon the act of the king and queen (I Kings, chap. 21). This was at the very close of our pre-prophetic period and shows that the age was sound at heart and recognized the right of a man to hold on to

his little patrimony even when by so doing he frustrated plans for the promotion of the royal pleasure.

20. *Ethical authority.*—The administration of justice and the authority for its enforcement in later times lay in the hands of the king; David already exercised it. But in the earlier part of our period the public conscience and generally accepted custom established authoritative standards. The rigid rules of later times were largely lacking and the men of those later days looked back upon these times as a period of chaos; e.g., "in those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6; 21:5). The force of public opinion in shaping customary morality is suggested by Tamar's protest to her half-brother Amnon, "no such thing ought to be done in Israel" (II Sam. 13:12); and more emphatically by the form of the statement of the woman of Abel as it runs in the Septuagint: "In early times they said, 'Counsel is surely asked at Abel and at Dan as to whether the things ceased which the faithful of Israel established; they shall surely ask of a matter in Abel and so forth, whether they ceased'" (II Sam. 20:18). A strong personality by his decision in a given crisis may establish a precedent for succeeding generations and this may in course of time crystallize into statutory law. One such case is on record in our period (I Sam. 30:24 f.). When David returned from his victory over the Amalekites, a dispute arose as to the distribution of the booty. Those who had participated in the fight grudged any share of the spoil to those who had stayed behind to guard the women and children and the impedimenta. David, however, with a keener sense of justice, decided in favor of those

who were left behind, saying, "as is his share that goes down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarries by the stuff; they shall share alike." This rule of David's became an established custom in Israel, i.e., a law, from that time on. Not only so, but in course of time this particular law, like all law, was given divine sanction, in that it was attributed to Moses, who received it directly from the lips of Yahweh in the plains of Moab (Num. 31:25–47; cf. Josh. 22:8).

21. *The significance of this period.*—In reflecting upon the materials surveyed in this chapter, it may at first thought seem as if we had been reading a copy of the crime sheet at the police headquarters of some large city. But we must bear in mind not only the fact already noted, viz., that goodness does not often get into the limelight, but also the further fact that our body of literature, small though it is, covers a history of approximately four hundred years. When this catalogue of evils is spread out over a period of that length, the impression it makes is much less vivid. Not only so, but to do justice to the ethical standards of those times, and particularly of the days in which our literary sources took form, we must remember to make allowance for the transactions and attitudes that clearly come under the condemnation even of our oldest sources of information. The encouraging fact is that there was a moral consciousness in early Israel. Its content differed from that of later times, but it was no less vigorous in its reaction against what it condemned—indeed, on the whole it was more so—and it was susceptible of education. It had not yet attained, but it was pressing forward to higher levels.

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONS OF EARLY ISRAEL

22*a*. *The sources of the materials* gathered in this chapter are the J and E documents of the Hexateuch.[1] These documents have preserved the traditions of Israel that were current from earliest times. In their present literary form they come from a relatively late period in pre-prophetic Israel and consequently have doubtless suffered much re-writing at the hands of editors; but much of their contents certainly originated in very early times and was passed on from generation to generation in succession, losing something of historical value in the process, but gaining much worth for the moral uplift of the generations. These were the stories told by the elders around the fireside and eagerly absorbed by the listening youth. Their educative value, therefore, for early Israel can hardly be exaggerated. Here we shall find the moral ideals and practices that did much to shape the thoughts and purposes of pre-prophetic Israel. These documents belong to the same general period as the histories we have considered in chapter i; we may not expect, therefore, anything essentially different here from what we have recorded there. The morals of an age are in general unified, and what we find in any one extensive expression of its life will be apt to reappear in

[1] For an explanation of these symbols and a discussion of their origin and character, see Carpenter and Harford-Battersby, *The Hexateuch* (1900); E. S. Brightman, *The Sources of the Hexateuch* (1918); A. T. Chapman, *An Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Cambridge Bible, 1911); and F. C. Eiselen, *The Books of the Pentateuch* (1916).

principle, if not also in precept and practice, in every corresponding section. Let us remind ourselves also that we are not looking here for information as to the characters and achievements of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and their brethren, but rather for light upon the moral conceptions and practices of the latter part of the pre-prophetic period as reflected in these traditions about the men of days gone by.

It will appear in reading this chapter that the amount of material representing standards that are today outgrown is considerably greater than that representing the more admirable qualities. It is necessary, therefore, to remind ourselves again that goodness has little value as "news." Only the abnormal, unusual, striking phenomena of life are apt to get into the stream of tradition. In all probability the prophets who edited these documents took them as they had been handed down, did not select or eliminate to any great extent, and sought to use what had come to their hands in the most effective way for the achievement of the moral and spiritual ends they themselves sought to serve.

22*b*. *The morals of Yahweh.*—We may begin again with a study of the moral aspects of the conception of God. The morals of the masses, at least, will not be any more exalted than the ethical attitudes and motives that they assign to Yahweh. We shall note first three of J's stories, which reflect a very primitive idea of Yahweh. In Exodus 24:9–11, we read, "Then went up Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel. . . . . And upon the elders of Israel he laid not his hand; and they beheld God, and did eat and drink." Again in Exodus 33:18–23,

we find, "And he [i.e., Moses] said, 'Show me I pray thee, thy glory. . . . .' And he said, 'Thou canst not see my face, for man shall not see me and live.' And Yahweh said, 'Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock. And it shall be that while my glory passes by I will put thee in a cleft of the rock and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by. And I will take away my hand and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen.'" To these two extraordinary stories we add a third from Exodus 4:24 ff. that is even more extraordinary. "And it came to pass on the way at the lodging place that Yahweh met him and sought to kill him [i.e., Moses]. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, 'Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me.' So He let him alone." With such conceptions of God as these—crass, materialistic, primitive, non-spiritual, and non-ethical—we may not expect to find a highly developed morality expressing itself in the thought of God or anywhere else.

a) In his *dealings with non-Israelites* Yahweh seems to be under very light moral obligations. Pharaoh is given no chance to escape destruction for himself and his people because Yahweh hardens his heart that he may not repent (Exod. 9:35; 10:20, 27 f.—all E). The Pharaoh who in all good faith took Sarah unto himself for wife was smitten with all his household in some mysterious way, because he had unwittingly taken Abraham's wife (Gen. 12:10–20 = J). In this case both Abraham and Sarah had been guilty of concealing the truth, but it was the innocent Pharaoh that must suffer. E's parallel story, in which the Philistine,

Abimelech, takes the place of the Egyptian Pharaoh, makes one significant additional statement, viz., that Abimelech was kept from sin by Yahweh, but the outcome is the same (Gen. 20:1–18=E). This addition was made not for the sake of the heathen king's reputation, but rather to save that of Sarah. It shows a slight advance of moral standards in E as compared with J. Yahweh ruthlessly sends down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah and wipes the cities and their populations off the face of the earth, because of their awful wickedness (Gen. 19:24, J). Fearful destruction was wrought upon the Egyptians at the behest of the angry Moses (Exod. 11:4–10, J). The midwives connived with the Hebrew mothers and saved the new-born sons alive, contrary to the Pharaoh's express orders, telling him unvarnished lies in explanation, and were blessed of Yahweh for so doing (Exod. 1:20 f., E). The escaping Hebrews were commanded by Yahweh to despoil the Egyptians (Exod. 3:22; 11:2, 3; 12:35 f.=E). A perpetual feud between Israel and Amalek was in accord with Yahweh's will (Exod. 17:16, E). The principle at the bottom of all this sort of thing is that Yahweh is conceived of as Israel's God and that he is counted upon to defend the interests of his own people and to damage those of all other peoples wherever the needs of Israel demand it. The prosperity of non-Hebraic peoples is dependent wholly upon their attitude to the Hebrews, Yahweh's own special favorites. "I will bless them that bless thee and him that curses thee I will curse" (Gen. 12:3, J).

b) The *conception of Yahweh* was not in this period, if ever, completely ethicized. Some phases of it lay

altogether outside of the sphere of ethics. For example, in Exodus 19:21 f., J, when Moses ascended Mt. Sinai, "Yahweh said to Moses, 'Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto Yahweh to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, that come near to Yahweh, sanctify themselves, lest Yahweh break forth upon them.'" Yahweh is here thought of as a consuming fire that destroys everyone whom it touches. The only safe way is to keep out of range of its deadly power or to render one's self immune to the danger by ritualistic measures. He is a menace to friend and foe alike. Character is no defense against his consuming wrath; only the performance of certain almost magical ceremonies is of avail.

We move back into the region of ethics again when we take up the story of the Fall as found in J and scrutinize it for its views of Yahweh. The origin of sin is there traced back finally to the malevolence of the Serpent. He makes appeal to the woman as "the weaker vessel" and induces her to break the command of Yahweh by eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree. No reason is given for this prohibition; it is an arbitrary decision on the part of Yahweh. With a slight modification of the original lines, we may say:

> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do or die.

The result of this disobedience is amazing. First of all, the man and the woman suddenly awake to a consciousness of the fact that they are naked. In other words, presumably this is a discovery of sex consciousness. Second, they learn that they have brought upon them-

selves endless troubles, the whole serpent brood shall lie in wait for them henceforth forever; the process of child-bearing shall be fraught with agony for successive generations of women; woman shall be forever subordinate to the will of man; the earth shall respond but grudgingly to the hard labor of man so that his life shall be spent in ceaseless toil; and finally he shall return in death unto the dust whence he came. Third, Yahweh realizes that mankind is now endowed with godlike knowledge in that he can distinguish between the beneficial and the injurious and, fearing lest man may "put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever,"[1] he drives him out of the Garden of Eden into the cold and hostile world. That is, Yahweh is jealous of his own supreme power and does not propose to leave the way open for mankind to become immortal and so to enter into rivalry with himself. The Tower of Babel story (Gen. 11:1–9, J) reflects the same solicitude upon Yahweh's part that man should be kept in his proper sphere and not be allowed to indulge his aspirations for equality with God too freely.

c) The *anger of Yahweh* flamed forth with destructive effect upon sinners, even when they were members of his own chosen nation. When the Hebrews were seduced by the women of Moab and participated in the worship of Baal of Peor, Yahweh ordered, "Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them up unto Yahweh before the sun, that the heat of the anger of Yahweh may turn away from Israel" (Num. 25:4, J). Moses also ordered the death of every man who had "joined him-

[1] This passage is perhaps to be assigned to a later editor of this story; but in any case it is a primitive aspect of the God-idea.

self unto the Baal of Peor." These drastic measures were necessary in order to stay the plague which had already carried off twenty-four thousand of the people. In like manner when Yahweh had pronounced a ban upon the spoil of Jericho and Achan had violated it by taking "a goodly Babylonish mantle and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels in weight" for his own use, Yahweh sent defeat upon the Israelites in their attack upon Ai, so that thirty-six men fell before the foe, and Yahweh's favor was not restored until Achan and his entire family were stoned to death and the stolen goods were burned. Here there is no nice measuring of the guilt and apportionment of it where it belongs, but all Israel must suffer that the guilt may be brought to light, and the transgressor's family perishes with him (Josh. 7:1–26). The methods of Yahweh were rough; but they were terribly effective.

d) Turning from these savage and almost brutal aspects of the idea of God, we take up *the more human phases* of that conception. Yahweh's blessing is bestowed upon his loyal servants in the bestowal of great prosperity. This blessing is not necessarily conditioned by moral considerations. "Yahweh was with Joseph and he was a prosperous man" (Gen. 39:2, 3, 21–23 = J). But he was also with the tricky Jacob and came to him in a vision at Bethel with promises of countless progeny and world-wide influence (Gen. 28:11–15, J). In grateful appreciation of his favor, Jacob enters into a contract with God by the terms of which God is to receive Jacob's service and a tithe of all his increase in return for food, raiment, and protection to Jacob (Gen. 28:20–22, E). Jacob is a born trader; he even

bargains with God. In quite human fashion, Yahweh is thought of as solicitous for his own reputation among men, and that reputation depends upon his giving victory to his people. After the defeat at Ai, Joshua addresses Yahweh thus: "Oh, Yahweh, what shall I say, now that Israel has turned its back before its enemies? For when the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land hear of it, they will surround us and cut off our name from the land; and what wilt thou do for thy great name?" (Josh. 7:9 f., J). And yet at other times the God-idea can be used to put to shame the human failings. This is the case in two E passages. In Numbers 23:19, Balaam impresses upon Balak the dependability of God by saying:

> God is not a man that he should lie;
> Nor a son of man that he should change his mind;
> When he has said, will he not do it?
> And when he has spoken, will he not bring it to pass?

In a different way, the same sort of correction of human standards is furnished by the story of Abraham's undertaking to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22:1–13. The story as written is a tactful protest against the practice of human sacrifice. That the practice was not unusual is fairly evident from the story itself. Abraham is represented as having received command from God to sacrifice his only child. It does not surprise him; he makes no protest, but proceeds to carry out the order. If the teller of this story had thought of the transaction as extraordinary or unique, he surely would have represented Abraham as objecting or questioning in some way; but instead Abraham takes it as a matter of course. If the event really happened in any such way

as is described, then it may be said that no sane man would ever conceive it to be his God-given duty to slaughter his only child in sacrifice, unless such doings were customary in his day. In any case, the angel of Yahweh is introduced to stop the impending tragedy and put the seal of divine approval upon Abraham's loyalty; and a sacrificial ram is provided in Isaac's place. God prefers rams to first-born sons. This is another instance in which E takes the way of ethical progress.

In Genesis 15:6, "Abraham believed Yahweh and he considered it for him as righteousness," which is variously assigned to J, E, and a later editor,[1] the word "righteousness" does not have its ordinary moral connotation. To whatever period it may belong, the thought is that Abraham's implicit confidence in the fulfilment of the divine promise, notwithstanding its extraordinary character, is accepted by Yahweh as fulfilling the conditions of real piety and satisfying all requirements, legalistic, ritualistic, or otherwise.

23. *The attitude toward foreigners.*—Leaving the ethical aspects of the God-idea, we now turn to the consideration of human relationships; and as in chapter i we shall take up first the attitude of these documents toward foreign nations and peoples. There is not the same unmitigated hostility toward foreigners here as in the historical stories in Judges and Samuel. The story of the origins of Moab and Ammon, figuratively presented as due to the incest of the daughters of Lot (Gen. 19:30–38, J), may be intended as a disgraceful reflection upon the character of those peoples; but that

[1] See Driver, Gunkel, Procksch, Skinner, and Dillmann, *in loc.*

this was J's point of view is by no means certain—the exceptional situation may have been regarded as warranting exceptional conduct. The women of Moab are made the occasion of Israel's harlotry and apostasy at a later day (Num. 25:1*b* = J). The patriarchs made treaties with foreign peoples (Gen. 21:22–32, E; 26:26:ff., J; 31:45–54, E) and Joshua, though inveigled into a treaty with Gibeon, nevertheless adhered to its terms (Josh. 9:22 f. = JE). On the other hand, no blame is attached to Moses for killing an Egyptian (Exod. 2:11, 12, J). Jacob cheats Esau (representative of Edom) out of his birthright (Gen. 27:1–45, J and E) and does not lose the favor of Yahweh thereby. Jacob likewise tricks his wily father-in-law, Laban the Syrian, and grows rich at his expense (Gen. 30:35–43, J). E's story makes Laban initiate the wrongdoing (Gen. 29:21–23, 25; 31:4–18*a*). E also contributes the humorous account of Rachel's successful theft of her father's teraphim (Gen. 31:19–35), and represents God as intervening with Laban in Jacob's behalf (Gen. 31:29). In this connection, attention may be called to the popular misinterpretation of the Mizpah "benediction" (Gen. 31:49). In its original sense, it more nearly approached a curse than a blessing. As the context convincingly shows, the heap of stones was to testify to a contract between Jacob and Laban; and the God of the contract is in these words adjured to keep watch over the fulfilment of its terms and to call to account either party transgressing the covenant. Woe betide such transgressor! Such stories as these at the expense of Syria would be more than welcome in the important work of maintaining the morale of Israel during the long period of the life-and-death struggle between

Damascus and Samaria, which was finally brought to an end by the ruthless hand of Assyria. A dastardly deed of treachery is recorded of Simeon and Levi against the clan of Shechem (Gen., chap. 34, J and E). It was not without provocation, certainly, in the rape of Dinah; but the angry brothers ignore Shechem's desire to make amends, slaughtering him and all the males of his clan. The only ground of protest given by Jacob is that his sons have made it unsafe for him to stay in those parts. The Blessing of Jacob, however, apparently finds the reason for the later misfortunes of Simeon and Levi in this massacre, and judges their wrath to have been accursed (Gen. 49:5–7, J), another indication of ethical progress.

In pre-prophetic Israel there was already present the consciousness that, as the people of Yahweh, Israel was sharply differentiated and set apart from all the neighboring peoples. J looks upon Israel as "the special possession" of Yahweh (Exod. 19:5); and only by a manifestation of the presence of Yahweh with Israel can it be known that his people are separated from all the peoples of the land (Exod. 33:16). This conviction of privilege was later to yield rich fruitage.

24. *Attitude toward women.*—Coming to the home and neighborhood ethics of the Hebrews as reflected in the traditions of the J and E documents, we first look into their treatment of women. It straightway appears that woman as the weaker vessel is made responsible for man's "first disobedience" and all its fateful outcome of woe (Gen. 3:1–6, J). The low estimate placed upon women and the degree to which they were subject to paternal authority are suggested by an incidental allusion to a common custom that is furnished by Numbers 12:14, E.

Speaking of Miriam, for whom Moses is pleading, God says, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be unclean for seven days?" Polygamy is the order of the day in these documents; a man's harem is limited only by the size of his income and his own inclination (Gen. 16:2 ff.; 22:24; 25:1; 29:26 f.; 32:22; 35:22*a*; 49:4; all = J; Gen. 29:21–23, 25 = E); a man might even take two sisters to wife at the same time. In such a polygamous society, family strife is inevitable (Gen. 16:2–6, J). Chivalry is conspicuous by its almost total absence. Lot offers his two virgin daughters to the passions of the men of Sodom, seeking thereby to save his guests (Gen. 19:8, J); while Abraham passes Sarah off as only his sister and imperils her honor in order to save his own life (Gen. 20:1–18, E). Harlotry was a disgrace for a woman, but apparently attended with no serious consequences for the man, at least when the woman was a recognized professional (Gen. 38:15, J; Josh. 2:12–14, JE). But there was a strong sentiment against adultery (Gen. 26:11, J), in all probability influenced strongly by the sense of property rights. And in course of time, harlotry itself came to be punished by the burning of the woman (Gen. 38:24, J); and rape, at least when a Canaanite was the offender, was a mortal offense (Gen. 34:7, J). But from this low level of sensuality and commercialism, there arise a few points of higher altitude. Abraham's sympathy was aroused by the plight of Hagar (Gen. 21:11, E). Joseph repulsed the advances of Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:6 ff., J). Moses volunteered his aid to the daughters of Jethro in their strife with the shepherds crowding around the well (Exod. 2:17, J). Isaac loved Rebekah, his wife

(Gen. 24:67, J); and Jacob, not only was attracted by Rachel at first sight (Gen. 29:11, J), but had for her an enduring affection. There is in all literature no more beautiful and telling expression of strong and genuine love than that describing Jacob's feelings for Rachel: "Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he bare her" (Gen. 29:20, J). This, it may be noted, was the love of a husband for his wife, not that of the unmarried lover. In such sentiments as these lies the promise of a better day for women.

25. *A low moral plane.*—The general moral practices and principles current among the Hebrews remain now for consideration. The law of blood-revenge was binding, and carried the blood-feud in its train. It is glorified in the savage song of Lamech:

> Adah and Sillah, hear my voice;
> Ye wives of Lamech, give ear to my speech!
> For I have slain a man for a wound to me,
> And a son for my blow.
> Surely Cain is avenged seven fold;
> But Lamech seventy and seven fold [Gen. 4:23 f., J].

The same strain sounds in the story of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:9 ff., J); the blood of Abel calls unto Yahweh for vengeance. The story, of course, shows that fratricide, at least, was condemned by the early Hebrew conscience, as does also the story of Joseph's treatment by his jealous brothers (Gen. 37:27, J). Theft was a crime if the victim were a pious Hebrew, but was passed over lightly under other circumstances. Rachel steals her father's idol, and is not condemned (Gen. 31:19, E); the Hebrews despoil the Egyptians at the command of Yahweh (Exod. 3:22, E); and Achan's theft was a fatal

crime because he took what was under the ban (Josh. 7:1–26, JE). The drunkenness of Noah is not explicitly condemned (nor is that of Lot), but Canaan brings a curse upon himself for his attitude of disrespect toward his drunken father (Gen. 9:20–27, J). Lying and deceit are treated as common human characteristics (Num. 23:19, E) and sometimes succeed in their ends. Sarah in fear lied to Yahweh, who by his divine perception immediately read her mind (Gen. 18:15, J). Abraham and Isaac are represented as telling half-truths in order to save their lives (Gen. 20:1–18, E; 26:6, J). Rebekah and Jacob conspired to deceive Isaac and their end was accomplished even though it involved Yahweh's accepting their deceit (Gen. 27:5 ff., J). Jacob's whole record is smirched with trickery. The habit of lying and cheating was so common that it was thought necessary that the parties to a contract should be bound by oath to keep their word and fulfil their promises (Gen. 24:2; 25:31 ff.; 26:26 ff.; 47:29 ff.; 50:4–6 [all from J]; Gen. 21:22–32; 50:25 [=E]). The essential primitivity of this sort of thing is suggested by the fact that in some cases the oath was taken with the hand upon the genital organs of the other party (Gen. 24:1 ff.; 47:29 ff., J). This list of offenses may close with the condemnation of unnatural, sexual indulgence furnished in connection with two cases (Gen. 19:5, J; 38:8 ff., J).

26. *The virtues of Israel* reflected in the records in J and E are more conspicuous than the sins. The purpose of these documents would itself require this. The makers of these narratives were seeking by means of them to preach religion to their contemporaries. They

were pointing them to the Israel of the past in order that they might warn them by its faults and stimulate them by the recital of its virtues. It would have been poor homiletics to have made the record of the fathers thoroughly bad; it was much better to enlarge upon the good and to seek to arouse a rivalry in good deeds on the part of the children. Furthermore, the records are essentially true. No society of men is wholly bad. The good predominates everywhere and comes to expression in many ways.

a) A fundamental conviction with the makers of these documents, as with all prophetically minded teachers of the pre-exilic period, was that *piety was always rewarded by prosperity*. All the great and good men of these narratives are blessed with riches and success. We are expressly told that "Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Gen. 13:2, J). Isaac inherited all that was his father's, and Jacob waxed rich at the expense of his Syrian father-in-law. Moses and Joshua, though severely tried on more than one occasion, nevertheless won glorious success finally over all obstacles and in spite of every enemy. Joseph could not be kept down. The nation as a whole prospered or languished in proportion as it was obedient to the will of God. This theory in general held good for Hebrew thought until the tragic days of the Exile, when some revision of it became imperative, if faith in God was to survive.

b) Some *admirable personal qualities* appear in the lives of the patriarchs and other heroes of the J and E traditions. Abraham is credited with great magnanimity in the account of his dealings with Lot, to whom he gives the first choice of pasture land, taking what was left for

himself (Gen. 13:7 ff., J). Joseph displayed even greater forbearance and charity in his treatment of his brethren when he had them in his power and chose to forego his opportunity for vengeance (Gen. 45:1*a*, 4*b*, 5*a*, J; 50:15–21, E). A gracious and generous hospitality is accredited to Abraham when he entertains the three men who turn out to be heavenly visitors (Gen. 18:1 ff., J). A similar spirit is shown by Lot when he shelters the angelic visitors to Sodom and defends them against the brutality of the Sodomites (Gen. 19:1 ff., J). Moses likewise met with gratitude and courteous hospitality at the hands of Jethro, in return for Moses' aid to his daughters (Exod. 2:19 ff., E).[1]

c) The *family life*, polygamous as it was, nevertheless left room for the manifestation of affection among its members. The ideal of genuine love between husband and wife we have seen illustrated in the cases of Isaac and Rebekah and Jacob and Rachel. Jacob also shows great affection for his children, and particularly for Joseph and Benjamin (Gen. 37:3, 35, J). Mothers, too, naturally displayed their love for their children,

[1] It must be noted that the guest right of the ancient world and the practice of kindness to strangers was perhaps not so altruistic as it seems to us. Anthropologists claim that such practices arise out of fear and caution. The usages and rights operative within the family or clan are clearly understood and generally respected and upheld. When a stranger appears, a member of an alien group or clan, he represents customs and rights that are not familiar and is under the protection of gods and demons that are not known or understood. Therefore the safe thing is to treat him with every possible courtesy that neither he nor his clan, nor his protecting spirits or gods may be incensed and stirred up to avenge neglect or wrong that he might otherwise suffer. Such a state of fear would somewhat mitigate our condemnation of such deeds as the surrender of women to the passions of the mob in order that guests may be unharmed.

though express statements to that effect are lacking; but Rebekah, though she inspired Jacob and connived with him to cheat Esau out of his right as first-born, nevertheless did not look with equanimity upon the possibility of losing both her sons (Gen. 27:41–45 J). A mother's love is likewise recognizable in the story of Hagar (Gen. 21:14–16, E), as also in that of Moses' birth (Exod. 2:1–10, E). Respect and affection for parents on the part of their children were not lacking. Canaan's ridicule of his drunken father, Noah, is the exception, not the rule. Judah's solicitude for his aged father is beautifully brought out in Judah's plea to Joseph (Gen. 44:18–34, J). A similar care is attributed to Reuben in the story of Joseph's sale into Egypt (Gen. 37:21 f., J). In one case, at least, the possibility of fraternal affection is recognized, viz., when Joseph reveals himself to his brother Benjamin (Gen. 43:29 ff., J). In another case, fraternal solicitude for a sister's reputation finds somewhat exaggerated expression (Gen. 34). A certain responsibility was recognized as obligatory upon brothers, even though only half-brothers (Gen. 37:27, J). Indeed, this went so far in one particular as to make it obligatory upon a brother to marry the widow of a brother dying without children and to rear the first child of this marriage as the child of the dead brother (Gen. 38:8 ff., J).[1]

d) Standards for public servants.—When Jethro advised Moses to unload some of his responsibilities in the administration of justice and to transfer them to the shoulders of subordinates, he was careful to describe the

[1] The inner significance of this custom may originally have lain in the belief in ancestor worship which was prevalent in the Semitic world.

kind of men suitable for the office of judge (Exod. 18:21, E). They should be capable, pious, truthful, and incorruptible, which being interpreted means, not susceptible to bribery. Those qualifications would go far toward satisfying the requirements of the office today. Moses himself is given credit for having been the most humble man upon the face of the ground (Num. 12:3, E), an ascription which shows that an unselfish life was already in this period recognized as ideal. This self-eliminating characteristic of Moses comes to finest expression in the account of Moses' attitude in connection with the worship of the golden calf in the desert (Exod. 32:30–32, J): "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said to the people, 'You have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto Yahweh, peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin.' And Moses returned to Yahweh, and said: 'Alas! this people has sinned a great sin in that they have made for themselves gods of gold. And now, if thou wilt pardon their sin—but if not, then blot me out from thy book which thou hast written.'" This is an ideal of utter devotion to the public good that can hardly be surpassed.

27. *The nature of evil.*—We close our study of these traditions with the citation of two episodes which reveal a high conception of the nature of sin or moral evil. When Joseph's brethren first met with difficulty at Pharaoh's court, they at once began to be troubled in conscience over their former maltreatment of Joseph; their own consciences condemned them (Gen. 42:21 f., E). They recognized that the responsibility for the wrong done to Joseph rested upon themselves and could not be escaped. Still more penetrating is the view of

the nature of sin in the story of the Fall (Gen. 3:1 ff., J). This is not merely a description of the first man's sin, but is also a diagnosis of every man's sin. The responsibility for sin is placed not upon the flesh in contradistinction from the spirit, but is traced back to its native lair, the will of man. This is fundamental in Hebrew ethics. Never is there any effort to shield the sinner from the punishment due him on the ground that he is not morally responsible or that he is bound by influences beyond his control. The attitude toward the transgressor throughout the Old Testament presupposes that it is in the sinner's power to turn from his evil way, if he but wills to do so. The responsibility for not doing so is his own.

The knowledge of "good and evil" and the ability to discriminate between them is recognized by the J document as conferring a godlike quality upon mankind (Gen. 3:22, J).[1] It is that which raises him immeasurably above the brute. He needs only eternal life with all that it involves to make him a truly divine being. As it is, the divine breath of life which is from God is wedded to, and hampered by, a body formed of the "dust of the earth." Death ends this unequal yoking together, and the material part of man that came from the dust returns to the dust (Gen. 3:19, J). The early Hebrew concerned himself but little with the fate of the spirit of man.

[1] The terms "good" and "evil" here were originally applied not exclusively or primarily to moral issues. They meant rather, things that were beneficial and things that were harmful, respectively. The eating of the forbidden fruit opened man's eyes so that he could discern the difference between that which was useful and that which was useless or worse. It is the dawn of practical intelligence that is here described.

CHAPTER III

THE MORALS OF THE EARLY CODES

28. *The rise of law.*—The bodies of law that constitute our source-material in this chapter are known as the Covenant Code and the Decalogue. The Covenant Code is recorded in two recensions, the one, Exodus 20:23—23:33, occurring as a part of the E narrative; the other, Exodus, chap. 34, being found in the J narrative. The Decalogue likewise appears in two forms, one in Exodus, chapter 20, the other in Deuteronomy, chapter 5; the earlier form is that in Exodus and that will be used here.[1]

a) Before entering upon an examination of the ethical content of these codes a word or two by way of introduction is required. *Codes of law grow slowly.* They are bodies of law that bring together in concise and accessible form the usages and decisions that have grown up in previous decades or centuries and are still in force. Laws are of two kinds, consuetudinary or customary, and statutory. The former consist of the customs and practices generally accepted in the social and economic life; the latter are the decisions of kings or great leaders, priests, and judges, formulated from time to time as

[1] There is also a third recension of the Decalogue recorded on a bit of papyrus and offering variations from the other two. This is known as the Nash Papyrus and is published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, XXV (1903), 34 ff., by S. A. Cook; and by F. C. Burkitt, in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XV (1903), 392–408; and XXI (1904), 559–61; and by N. Peters, *Die älteste Abschrift der Zehn Gebote, der Papyrus Nash* (1905).

critical cases arise and serving as precedents for similar cases thereafter. This being the case, the codification of law is necessarily the final stage of development. The code is the end of the legal process, not its beginning. This means that the laws of the Covenant Code and the Decalogue were developing down through our pre-prophetic period, but that in their present form as codes they represent the close of the period rather than its opening. We cannot trace the history of the rise of these codes in detail, but must content ourselves with treating them as units representative of the life and thought of the latter part of our period.

b) A second fact must be noted. *The laws of a people are never on a par with the best thought and sentiment of that people.* Law always lags behind the developing social conscience.[1] The reasons for this are obvious. The makers of the law and its chief executors are always "the elders" of the people. They represent the ideas and ideals of the generation that is passing off the stage. Youth has little if any voice in such matters. Moreover, the substantial people of any society have acquired their property, influence, and power under the operation of existing laws, and their influence in general is thrown against any new legislation that bids fair to work a change that will imperil their hard-won gains. There are "vested interests" in every social order. Then, too, the developing social consciousness of the rising generation is not sufficiently unified to permit its crystallization into law. The crying social needs of the time call forth different proposals for remedy, and discussion

[1] See R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Study of Society* (1921), pp. 449 f.

regarding these waxes hot; parties are formed, and legislative action waits upon the requisite education of the public mind as a whole. This gap between the higher standards of a people and its legal enactments is, of course, most marked in a democratically organized society. But though perhaps not so pronounced in a patriarchal or despotically organized society it is none the less real. No ruler, or rulers, can long disregard with impunity the sentiments of his people. His arbitrary power is always limited by the power of public opinion; and public opinion resents being compelled to conform to higher standards than it recognizes as binding, just as keenly as it resents oppression of any other sort. This means, then, as applied to our Hebrew codes, that the standards of these codes are standards generally accepted by the people of Israel and that they are not the idealistic legislation of one or more forward-looking individuals. We are not here listening to somebody standing head and shoulders above the people of his generation, as is true of some of the great prophets, but we hear rather the mighty voice of the great public declaring its accepted principles.

29. *The ethical aspect of the conception of God* is but scantily represented in these early laws. In a certain sense, indeed, God is presupposed as behind all these laws and as giving them the indorsement of his authority. These legal principles and practices doubtless grew out of the social need in Israel as they did everywhere else, but by the time of the J and E documents they had achieved divine sanction, being promulgated as the oracles of God. A few laws reflect the ethics of the God-idea directly. Both Exodus 22:29 f. and 34:19

record a law requiring the offering of the first-born to Yahweh; the latter passage puts it upon the same basis with the sacrifice of the firstlings of oxen and sheep on the eighth day—but the J code hastens to add, "the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem." It is altogether probable that at an early date in Israel, as also among the Canaanites, the actual sacrifice of the first-born was demanded. But the social conscience of Israel had risen above this level by the time of our oldest sources of information. Samuel, Jephthah's daughter, Samson, Samuel's son Joel, and David's brother Eliab were all first-born children of their mothers. Hence clearly the ancient law was more often honored in the breach than in the observance. At any rate, the form of the law in Exodus, chapter 34 shows that the public conscience had outgrown the primitive custom.

a) A primitive custom that continued and found the indorsement of the early Hebrew codes is that of *the ordeal.* It is provided for as a means of testing innocence in Exodus 22:8–11. Such an institution quite evidently presupposes a conviction that God can discern things hidden from the eye of man and can be depended upon to detect the guilty and to punish him appropriately. It also recognizes the fact that under certain circumstances where all evidence is lacking and no witnesses can be found, some men will lie unless they be held in check by fear of the wrath of a just God. The penalty of death is pronounced upon witches[1] and likewise upon those who sacrifice to other gods than Yahweh.[2] Reverence toward God and respect for rulers are enjoined together in one and the same law.[3]

[1] Exod. 22:18. [2] Exod. 22:20. [3] Exod. 22:28.

The conception of holiness moves in the sphere of the metaphysical rather than the ethical, for Israel's "holiness" is imperiled by the eating of the flesh of animals torn by wild beasts.[1] Accidental homicide is laid upon the shoulders of God rather than those of the unintentional slayer.[2] Such primitive conceptions are apt to linger longer in the sphere of the conception of God than elsewhere. This is not surprising when we realize that to ethicize is to humanize.

30. *Property rights.*—The legislation of the Covenant Code and the Decalogue is on the whole, in so far as it has to do with the field of ethics, equally interested in persons and things. Property rights and personal rights are each protected by approximately the same number of laws. In two cases, significantly enough, viz., slaves and women, the categories of persons and property are inextricably intertwined. But the dominant interest in both cases is that of property. Hence we shall classify them there. The laws regarding property are characteristic of a simple society with predominantly agricultural interests. The complications arising from trade and commerce and industrial organization are entirely lacking. In this respect it differs greatly from the life for which Hammurabi's Code was prepared.

a) *Theft* is prohibited by both Hebrew codes (Exod. 22:1–4;[3] 20:15), but the simple prohibition of the Decalogue is elaborated with reference to specific cases in the Covenant Code. Apparently no penalty was

[1] Exod. 22:31.

[2] Exod. 21:13.

[3] These verses are perhaps disarranged. In any case vss. 3*b* and 4 continue the thought of vs. 1.

attached to this crime other than that of making costly restitution: in case the thief kill or sell the stolen animal, he must repay fourfold for sheep and fivefold for ox; but if it be found in his possession still alive, the restitution need only be double. This is an interesting discrimination, based presumably upon the feeling that the man who does not go to the point of killing or selling the stolen animal is not so far advanced in crime as he who does sell or kill. In connection with this crime another discrimination is made that shows a sense of right: if a thief is caught breaking into an inclosure at night and is slain, the slayer is not subject to the law of blood-revenge; but if under similar circumstances he be slain by day, the avenger of blood has full right of way.

b) Closely related to theft is the abuse of *trusteeship or guardianship* (Exod. 22:7–13). If the trustee has stolen the property put in his charge and the theft is proved, he pays double as in the case of the ordinary thief. If the trustee declares his innocence and no convincing proof is at hand, the owner must abide by the decision of God, expressed through some kind of ordeal. If the accused is condemned of God, he pays double for his theft, and apparently suffers no additional penalty for lying. If the animal intrusted to another come to mishap, nobody knowing how the damage was done, the same settlement by ordeal is provided for, and if the guardian is acquitted by God, no restitution is made. But if the animal be stolen from the guardian, he is held responsible and must make restitution; he should have taken better precautions. If, however, a wild beast kills the intrusted animal and the guardian can produce some fragments in proof,

he is free from responsibility. Likewise a borrower is not held responsible for damage or death of a borrowed animal, if the owner was along with it at the time; but if the owner was not along, the borrower must make good the loss. That is to say, when a man goes out with his ox or ass to work, he must take the risks involved; but if his own personal supervision is dispensed with, the hirer must take the risks.

c) Carelessness resulting in *damage to other people's property* is also penalized. If a man leave a hole uncovered and an animal fall therein and die, the careless one must give another animal in place of the dead one, and take the dead one for himself (Exod. 21:33 f.). A rough sense of justice is seen in the case of an ox goring another man's ox to death. If it is the ox's first offense, the ox is sold and the price divided between the two men, and the dead ox is likewise divided. This, of course, leaves both men with equal values at the close of the transaction, though the one ox may have been much more valuable than the other when both were alive. But the more valuable ox would almost certainly be the bigger and stronger animal and the loss, therefore, would fall upon the man whose ox caused the trouble. But if the goring ox was known to be dangerous, the owner should have kept him under control and must make good the loss to the other man, taking the dead ox for himself (Exod. 21:35 f.). Similarly, the man who lets his cattle run wild, must pay the damage to his neighbor's crops or vineyard by giving of the best of his own (Exod. 22:5). Likewise, he who kindles fire carelessly and causes damage to his neighbor's crops, must recompense his neighbor for his loss (Exod. 22:6).

d) The *laws regarding slavery* are relatively numerous and explicit, showing that the institution was well developed in early Israel (Exod. 21:2–11, 20, 32). All the regulations are concerned with the Hebrew slaves only; presumably, captives in war had few, if any, rights that Hebrews were bound to respect. Hebrews became slaves to fellow-Hebrews either in payment of debts which they were unable to pay otherwise; or in the case of girls, by being sold by their fathers for what they would bring as wives and concubines (Exod. 21:7). Hebrew men who became slaves were given their freedom after six years of service; but no such boon was available for women slaves (Exod. 21:7). If a slave wife were not pleasing to her owner, he could "let her be redeemed," presumably by any relative who might be able and willing; if no such redeemer was forthcoming, the husband seems to have had the right to sell her to a Hebrew purchaser, but he might not sell her to foreigners in view of his failure to maintain her in her proper status as a wife. Such a law shows that the slave wife or concubine was not looked upon altogether as a thing that might be bought and sold; she was recognized as having some personal rights. The dependence of children upon the mother was, of course, the reason for denying the slave woman the right of release in the seventh year. If a man and wife fell into slavery, the wife went free with her husband at the end of six years; but if the wife had been given to the slave by his master, then both wife and children remained the property of the master, though the slave husband went out free. Naturally, under such circumstances, some slaves would prefer to remain slaves rather than be deprived of their

families; if so, they bound themselves to life-long servitude.

e) The *purity of the slaveholder's polygamous family* is carefully guarded. If a man give one of his slave girls to his son as wife, he must henceforth treat her like his own daughter, no matter what his previous relations with her have been. If a slave-owner takes a second slave wife, alongside of the first, he must in no wise fail in his duty of maintenance and of marriage to the first wife, on penalty of her becoming a free woman if he does. Such a law was evidently intended to militate against mistreatment of slave women by their masters and to put a check upon the slaveholder's lust.

f) The slave had little protection against *personal violence* other than his own money value to his owner. If an angry or cruel owner beat a slave to death on the spot, he is punished in some undefined way for the deed. But if the slave survive the beating for a day or two, the master goes scot free; "Is he not his money?" The apparent reason for discrimination here lies in the presumption that if the slave die under the beater's hands, that was the end sought by the enraged master; but if he survive a few days, then the master evidently did not intend to kill him and is punished enough by the loss of a valuable bit of property. The motive of the master is the determining factor in the decision. The person of the slave is protected against violence still further by the law that the master who puts out a slave's eye or knocks out a tooth must free the injured slave as compensation. The value of a slave is fixed by the law that his owner must be given thirty pieces of silver if the slave be gored to death by another man's ox

(Exod. 21:32). With slaves as valuable property, it was inevitable that some rascals would not hesitate to steal a man, if occasion presented itself or could be found, and sell him into slavery or add him to their own list of slaves. Consequently the death penalty is provided for such cases (Exod. 21:16).

g) *Woman* as such receives no consideration in these codes. It is only in her capacity as actual or potential wife and mother that she becomes the subject of legislation and that, for the most part, upon a property basis. If a man seduces an unbetrothed virgin, he must take her to wife, if her father consents, and must pay the full dowry; but if the father refuses to give her to him, he must pay the dowry notwithstanding (Exod. 22:16). The obvious reason for this is that the girl's monetary value as a potential bride is seriously impaired. The woman in the case is at the disposal of her father and has no rights of her own; she must enforce her claims through him. In the case of a woman with child who is accidentally injured by another than her husband so that miscarriage results, the author of the injury must pay such a fine as the husband determines, but with right of appeal to the judges whose decree is final. If still more serious injury follows the accident, then the *lex talionis* operates, "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Exod. 21:22–25). The sin of adultery is prohibited by the seventh command of the Decalogue—a bare prohibition with no conditions or penalties attached. Whether the motive of the prohibition belonged in the property or personal sphere, we have no means of knowing.

31. *Personal rights.*—Moving over into the area of personal rights and interests, we observe that while many of these laws have social implications, social legislation as such is for the most part lacking. Men are dealt with primarily as individuals, not as social groups, or organized bodies. Undue exposure of the person is provided against in the law prohibiting an approach by steps unto the altar of Yahweh (Exod. 20:26). Indulgence in unnatural lust is punished by death (Exod. 22:19). The list of capital crimes is brief, including only deliberate murder in general (Exod. 21: 12, 14), (though not accidental homicide which is apparently without penalty [21:13]), and patricide and matricide in particular (21:15), the laying of a curse upon father or mother (21:17; cf. the fifth commandment of the Decalogue, 20:12, where positive honoring of parents is enjoined), man-stealing (21:16), sacrifice to other gods (22:20), sorcery (22:18), and keeping a vicious ox which kills a free man (21:29–31). The brevity of this list compares very favorably with the long list of capital crimes in many Christian countries up to within quite recent times.

Personal injuries are limited to two cases, aside from injuries to women and slaves already mentioned (pp. 57 f.). If an ox that has heretofore had a good record kills a person, the ox is stoned but its owner escapes further punishment; if the ox is an old offender, the ox and owner are both slain, but the owner may ransom himself if he has the means (21:28–31), except in case the victim is a slave, when a cash penalty is fixed (see p. 57). The second case concerns the man who injures another in a quarrel (21:18, 19). If the injury is not fatal or

permanent, the one who inflicted the injury must pay his victim for his loss of time and provide for the expenses of his illness. This law presupposes some arrangement for compensation in cases of permanent injury, but no specific provisions of this sort are prescribed.

32. *Social rights.*—We take up now those laws dealing with persons which are, so to speak, semi-social. These laws involve cases in which society in general is directly or indirectly affected by the conduct of individuals in a special degree. These are chiefly concerned with the protection of the poor and weak. The observance of the Sabbath is three times enjoined (Exod. 20:8; 23:12; 34:21); and though the original implication of the Sabbath was wholly with reference to pleasing the deity, its outcome was inevitably humanitarian, and already in our older sources stress is laid upon that aspect. Keep the Sabbath "that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thine handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed." Even in the most strenuous times, when slaves were liable to be overworked, viz., "in plowing time and in harvest, thou shalt rest." This same interest in the "stranger" is expressed in prohibitions of the oppression of "strangers" (22:21*a*; 23:9). The "stranger" was in especial need of protection because, coming into the Hebrew social order from outside, he was a member of no powerful family or clan and was liable to harsh treatment at the hands of those who thought they might abuse him with impunity.[1] Care for the interests of the poor is evinced by special laws. No interest might be charged upon money loaned to a poor

[1] Another set of motives may also have operated to the benefit of strangers. Cf. p. 45, n. 1.

Hebrew; and if his garment were taken as security for the loan it must be returned to him at nightfall, lest he be without proper covering while he tries to sleep (Exod. 22:25–27). The products of that portion of the land which becomes fallow every year must be left for the sustenance of the poor, and this includes the vineyard and the olive plantation. (23:10, 11). The poor man is entitled to a just judgment when he appears in court (23:6); but on the other hand sympathy for the poor must not prejudice either witness or judge in their favor (23:3).

The importance and necessity of a fair administration of justice is recognized in a group of laws. False witness is forbidden (20:16). Collusion with wicked witnesses is prohibited (23:1). Yielding to the might of public opinion and joining the majority in violating one's own knowledge of what is right, so that judgment is perverted, is denounced (23:2). The citizen is bidden to shun all falseness and so to avoid slaying the innocent and righteous (23:7); and the acceptance of gifts or bribes is warned against on the ground that one under such obligation cannot see straight nor speak truly (23:8). The spreading of false or groundless reports either by originating them or by passing them along comes under legal condemnation (20:16; 23:1).

33. *Moral insight.*—There remain three laws that are very penetrating in their insight into character and motive. If a man meets his enemy's ox or ass going astray, he is bidden to return the stray animal to its owner (23:4). If a man sees his foe's ass fallen under a load, he must turn in and help his neighbor raise the fallen animal (23:5). This is making heavy draughts

upon the good nature of the ordinary Hebrew. Finally, the Decalogue comes to a climax with its embargo upon coveting (20:17).

This tenth commandment is commonly made much of by those who would postpone the origin of the Decalogue to the seventh century and make it a summary based upon the teaching of the great prophets. As the Decalogue now stands in our Hebrew and English Bibles, that date is none too late for its appearance. But in its original form as the "ten words"[1] there is no need of deferring its composition to so late a period. The moral precepts for the most part are of that simple, elementary type without the practice of which no human society, large or small, can continue. Most of these precepts are already involved in the legislation of the Covenant Code and worked out in more detail there. It is commonly urged against the tenth "word" that it deals not with acts but with motives, and that subjective legisla-

[1] These "ten words" have been greatly expanded by later editors. The nature of that expansion may be seen by comparing the recension in Exod., chap. 20 with that in Deut., chap. 5. Originally the decalogue consisted of ten brief lapidary sentences, to which the title "phrases" or "words" would fittingly apply, the Hebrew being much more concise than the English rendering. Reduced to their original form, the "ten words" were as follows:

(1) Thou shalt have no other gods beside me.
(2) Thou shalt not make for thee a graven image.
(3) Thou shalt not utter the name of Yahweh for an evil purpose.
(4) Remember the Sabbath to sanctify it.
(5) Honor thy father and thy mother.
(6) Thou shalt do no murder.
(7) Thou shalt not commit adultery.
(8) Thou shalt not steal.
(9) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
(10) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

tion of this sort is not to be looked for prior to the presentation of the moral ideals of the prophets. But as we have just seen, the legislation of the Covenant Code does not confine itself to objective acts. Indeed, it is rather noticeable that it goes beyond and behind the act itself in several instances, and takes account of the motive involved. This is seen, for example, in the discrimination between murder and accidental homicide (see p. 59); in the remitting of interest to the poor and the return of his pledged garment (see pp. 60 f.); in the caution not to favor the poor in a legal trial (see p. 61); in the warning not to be overborne by public opinion (see p. 61); and in particular in the two laws just quoted with reference to helping an enemy (see p. 61). The prohibition of coveting is certainly no more searching test of character than these. We may, therefore, with fair warrant make the ethical precepts of the Decalogue as old as the Covenant Code legislation and use it legitimately as a source of information for the ethical standards of the pre-prophetic period.

34. *Kenite hypothesis.*—In this connection a few words may be said upon the explanation of Hebrew moral development offered by the advocates of the Kenite hypothesis of the origin of the religion of Yahweh.[1] Briefly stated, this theory holds that the Israelites did not know Yahweh until they learned of him through Moses, who had become his worshiper while staying with his father-in-law, Jethro, the Kenite. He had gone

[1] For a full exposition of this theory, see Karl Budde, *Religion of Israel to the Exile* (1899), pp. 1–38; cf. Geo. A. Barton, *A Sketch of Semitic Origins*, chap. vii; H. P. Smith, *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 50 ff.; and L. B. Paton, "The Origin of Yahweh-Worship in Israel," *Biblical World*, XXVIII (1906), 113–27.

back to Egypt and in the name of Yahweh had summoned the enslaved Hebrews to follow him out of Egypt. After the crossing of the Red Sea, Moses had led Israel to Sinai where Jethro, priest of Yahweh, had welcomed them into the ranks of Yahweh-worshipers and given them the right hand of fellowship. This theory is furthermore developed by Budde in such a way as to make it furnish the cause and explanation of the wonderful moral superiority of Israel's religion over that of all other Semites, including the Kenites themselves. In Budde's own words the case is thus stated:

Thus all attempts to find the germ of the ethical development of the Yahweh-religion in the material content of the conception of God as represented by Moses have completely failed. Let us now enquire whether by asking the question "How?" instead of "What?" we cannot reach a better result. *How* did Israel come to its religion? It went over, at Sinai, to a rude nomad religion, a religion which did not stand higher than that of other tribes at the same stage of civilisation. It served henceforth the same God as the tribe of the Kenites to which Moses' wife belonged. But the Latin proverb rightly says, "When two do the same thing it is not the same." For one fundamental difference existed between Israel and the Kenites from the beginning. The latter, like numberless other tribes and peoples, had had their god from time immemorial. But Israel had turned to Him of its own free will, and chosen Him as its God. The Kenites served their god because they knew no better; because he was of their blood-kindred, and had grown up in inseparable union with them; because his worship belonged to the necessary and almost unconscious expression of the life of the people. This was still the case with their remote descendants, the Rechabites of the time of Jeremiah. But Israel served Yahweh because He had kept His word; because He had won Israel as His possession by an inestimable benefit; because it owed Him gratitude and fidelity in return for this boon, and could ensure its further prosperity only by evidences of such fidelity.

Thus, in the very transition to this new religion, virtues were both awakened in the heart of the people and maintained in continuous watchfulness. If Yahweh-worship itself had no ethical character, this relation to Him had such character, and all future development could spring therefrom.

This explanation of Budde's gave the Kenite hypothesis a new lease of life. It seemed to solve one of the most difficult problems in the study of Hebrew religion in comparison with other religions; and it was accepted far and wide without further question. But time has given opportunity for reflection and the assent to this theory is not so unanimous today as twenty years ago.[1] We are here concerned only with the ethical phase of the hypothesis; and from that point of view two serious objections to its validity must be reckoned with. The first of these comes from a survey of the history of religions for the discovery of parallel cases. Clans, tribes, and peoples have changed their gods, voluntarily and involuntarily, times without number in the history of man. Nowhere else in the world has such a change of gods ever brought about, in and of itself, such striking moral superiority to other peoples as did the acceptance of Yahweh according to the Kenite hypothesis. For example, the Western Semites who entered Babylonia in early times accepted the culture and religion of the Babylonian plains without any such astonishing after-effect as is here presupposed. In like manner, the Kassites came down into the same region and were absorbed into the new life and culture and left no marked moral impress upon that life. When the Hebrews were deported from Samaria, they were them-

[1] Cf. J. P. Peters, *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 80 ff.; A. Knudson, *The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament*, pp. 157 ff.

selves merged in the Assyrian population and accepted its religion and disappeared from history. Their place was taken in Samaria by certain Arab clans, who found it advisable to learn the religion of the land, and no great illumination or moral uplift is on record with regard to them. Still further, Syria has been "a land flowing with milk and honey" to the eyes of many nomadic clans. Again and again they have pressed in from the desert and made for themselves a place among the settled population of Syria. They have brought their native gods with them and have served them alongside of the gods of the land and have finally accepted the religion of the land outright. Yet we have no single record of any great moral progress resulting from such exchange of gods.[1] Consequently, from this point of view, the Kenite hypothesis offers an explanation that is itself inexplicable. The second objection to this explanation is that it is too simple. It traces the ethical splendor of Israel back to one single cause, viz., the act of voluntary choice in the adoption of Yahweh by the Hebrew clans at Sinai. We might almost as reasonably attempt to ascribe the origin of the ocean to a single stream. The ethical life of a people is a thing of complex and composite character. It is fed by many streams. Each individual and every social group makes its contribution. Economic, political, social, and religious forces all combine and are inextricably interwoven in the production of ethics. It is therefore extremely hazardous to pick out any one single act in a people's history and hold it responsible for all the later moral progress. As a matter of fact, the moral life of pre-prophetic Israel, as we have

[1] See R. Dussaud, *Les Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (1907), pp. 1–23.

surveyed it in chapters i and ii, does not present anything that would warrant us in bestowing any prize for moral excellence upon the Hebrew people of that age as compared with any other people in a similar stage of progress in the upward course toward full civilization. The glory of Hebrew life was a thing yet to be revealed and is inexplicable apart from the great prophets.

If the Hebrew tradition regarding the proceedings at Sinai-Kadesh have any solid foundation, the situation was such as to give a moral impetus to the clans there present. The Hebrew clans that came out of Egypt there joined the Kenites, Kenizzites, Calebites, and other clans dwelling in the Negeb and formed a political and religious federation with them. Whatever legislation was adopted there was, of course, not new but rather a revision of previously existing laws and customs. But more than that, it was also an expansion of the sphere of operation for those laws and customs. Whereas before the federation each clan had observed certain principles of practice with reference to its own members, after the federation these same rules and customs became obligatory for all the members of the participating clans. This expansion of the area within which moral obligations operated meant much for moral progress. The moral principles that were embodied in the terms of the federation were, of course, simple and elementary and probably only such as were in force among all nomadic societies of the time and region, but the inclusion within the area of their enforcement of a large number of members of various clans, heretofore lying outside of that area, was a fact of no small importance morally.[1]

[1] Cf. C. H. Cooley, *Social Organization* (1909), chap. xi, "The Enlargement of Consciousness."

It would not be wise to trace all the later moral progress of the Hebrews back to this source, after the manner of the advocates of the Kenite hypothesis; but this fact must be included among the causes of the moral and religious leadership of Israel, the sources of which seem to have lain to so large an extent to the south and southwest of ancient Palestine.[1]

35. *Leading virtues.*—For the sake of convenience, we shall now summarize the principal virtues emphasized in the literature of this pre-prophetic period. This will enable us to realize the main things that commended themselves to the social mind of that age.

The center of interest was not the individual, but the group to which he belonged. The social life and welfare took precedence of the individual's interests. The individual lived primarily not for himself, but for his family, clan, or tribe. Not that the individual was himself conscious of such an unselfish aim or purpose, but the community at large thought of its individual members from that point of view. The individual was valued in terms of what he was worth to his group and how he could be useful in its service. Individuals from other groups, who had forsaken their own kin and were seeking the protection of a Hebrew family or clan, were welcomed into the new fellowship and were protected

[1] See J. M. Powis Smith, "Southern Influences upon Hebrew Prophecy," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XXXV (1918), 1–19; cf. *idem*, "Some Problems in the Early History of Hebrew Religion," *ibid.*, XXXII (1916), 81–97; D. D. Luckenbill, "On Israel's Origins," *American Journal of Theology*, XXII (1918), 24–53; T. J. Meek, "A Proposed Reconstruction of Early Hebrew History," *ibid.*, XXIV (1920), 209–16; *idem*, "Some Religious Origins of the Hebrews," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XXXVII (1921), 101–31.

in their elemental rights by the common consent of the clan. Laws and customs protecting such "strangers" and "guests" form a prominent element in the social order. But foreigners had no claims upon Hebrews. Anything that was practicable and safe might be done to them apparently. The only consideration protecting a foreigner or a foreign group was the question as to whether or not there were powerful allies or friends either spiritual or earthly who were in a position to avenge wrongs done to a foreigner by the Hebrews. This same social bond appears in the institution of blood-revenge, which was in good and regular standing. A beginning of discrimination in the practice of the rite is seen in the recognition of certain places as asylums whither the accidental man-killer might flee for safety, if he could arrive there without being intercepted by the blood-avenger.

Polygamy was in good repute. The more wives the better, provided they were good ones. Women were to a large extent not persons, but things to be bought and sold. Yet there was room for deep family affection and for genuine personal love. Religion was no respecter of sex. At least, the prophetic function could be exercised as well by a woman as by a man.

Slavery of foreigners and even of fellow-Hebrews was a recognized part of the social fabric. It was modified for the Hebrew slave by a requirement that he be released at the end of six years' labor. And further care for him was exercised in that his master was penalized for cruel and unusual treatment of him. In similar fashion, the poor were provided for to a limited extent. They were protected by law against grasping and exorbitant cred-

itors and a certain amount of unstable charity was provided for them.

The elements in personal character that meet with approval and commendation are simple and fundamental. Among a people compelled to fight for the right to exist, bravery was in high esteem. A certain largeness of mind or generosity is also predicated of the best men. The quality of gratitude for favors received and service rendered was also greatly appreciated. Honesty, integrity, and justice are indispensable elements of true manhood. The loyalty of true friendship also captured the imagination and made a profound impression. The virtues of the second table of the Decalogue represent the generally accepted standards of personal life for the period. These comprise reverence for parents, regard for the value of human life, solicitude for the purity of family life, respect for property rights, rigid adherence to the truth and nothing but the truth in matters of law, and a proper control of the inner life such as shall prevent covetousness. Such virtues as these lie at the foundation of all moral order. The observance of these laws and the living of the proper social life, together with its religious obligations, were thought to insure prosperity and success, whether for individual or group.

PART II

THE MORALS OF THE PROPHETIC PERIOD

CHAPTER IV

THE PROPHETS OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY

36. *The times of Amos.*—The eighth century in Israel stands out from all the centuries by reason of the fact that it produced four great Hebrew prophets, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. The appearance of these men marked a new era in the religious life of Israel and in the history of mankind. They were idealists of the first rank—men whose ideals were dearer to them than life itself. They sought to make these ideals effective in the life of their times and insisted upon their supreme value though their contemporaries rejected them and their ideals.

The first of these prophets was Amos, and he struck the keynote of all subsequent prophecy. He called Northern Israel to the bar, declared her guilty, and passed sentence of death upon her. This judgment of doom was not based upon a study of the movements of armies in Western Asia, nor upon a shrewd estimate of the strength of the various powers by whom Israel was surrounded. Amos began his prophetic career at approximately 765 B.C.[1] At that particular time and for the next decade there was nothing on foot in Western Asia or in Egypt that would have warranted a prediction of military conquest of Israel by any possible foe.

At the death of Adad-nirari of Assyria, in 783 B.C., the Assyrian Empire entered upon a struggle for life. Between 783 and 773 B.C., Shalmaneser headed six campaigns against the kingdom of Urartu,

[1] See W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea* (1905), pp. cii ff.

which lay to the north of Assyria, in the region above Lake Van. In the course of this struggle, the foe on one occasion pressed down to within a few days' journey of Nineveh. The Syrian states farther west, who had leagued together against Assyria in 854 B.C. and again in 849 and 846, and had been harassed by her armies in almost each successive year from 843 to 828 B.C. and again from 806 to 797 B.C., were naturally vitally interested in the progress of the contest between Assyria and Urartu and cast in their lot with Urartu against Assyria. Hence, after repelling Urartu, Shalmaneser pushed west in 773 and attacked Damascus. His successors, Ashurdan and Ashur-nirari campaigned against Hadrach in central Syria in 772 and 765 B.C. and defended Arpad against the Chaldi of Urartu in 754 B.C. This was the last flicker of Assyrian power in the West until the accession of Tiglath-pileser in 745 B.C. These were days of waning power in Assyria, and the future of the western lands was by no means clearly recognizable. Would Assyria revive and reassert her old-time power? Or would the peoples of Urartu succeed in displacing her power by their own? Amos did not undertake to answer this question for his contemporaries. He is content to indicate the north as the direction whence destruction is coming upon the states of Syria and Palestine.

During this same period, the reign of Jeroboam II, Israel was enjoying a prosperity that had not been equalled since the reign of Solomon. Egypt was powerless to trouble her, the last days of the 22d Dynasty being marked by internal conflicts and schisms that consumed all her energy. As a result of the Assyrian campaigns in the West, under Shalmaneser (859–825 B.C.) and Adad-nirari (812–783 B.C.), Syria, the old enemy of Israel, who had reduced her to a pitiable state in the reigns of Jehu (II Kings 10:32) and Jehoahaz (II Kings 13:7), had herself been rendered powerless and incapable of further molesting her southern neighbor. Jeroboam indeed, following up the successes of Joash (II Kings 13:25), expelled Damascus completely from the territory of Israel (II Kings 14:25–28). Judah, too, after Amaziah's vain attempt to assert independence from Joash (II Kings 14:8–14), troubled Israel no more and probably paid regular tribute.

Freed thus from external conflicts, Israel was left to recuperate from her exhausting wars with Syria and to develop her own internal resources in peace. The resulting prosperity is reflected in the sermons of Amos.[1]

37. *The basis of the message of Amos.*—As a matter of fact, Amos was very vague in his reference to the agent or agency through which disaster was to be brought upon Israel. In several passages he expresses himself in such a way as to show that he is anticipating Israel's destruction at the hands of an invading army, but he never definitely names the invader (see 3:11; 4:2, 3; 5:27; 6:14; 7:11, 17). In other passages he seems to have looked for the disaster in the form of an earthquake or some other natural catastrophe (2:14–16; 5:3, 16, 17; 8:8–14; 9:1–4). The thing of which he is certain and about which he is specific is his conviction that Israel must fall, and that at the hands of her own God. The basis of his certainty, therefore, was not found in any external support, but lay rather within himself. It was a conviction that possessed his soul, an ineradicable assurance that needed no external support. As a matter of fact the nation of Northern Israel was more prosperous and powerful in the days of Amos than it had ever been since it became a separate kingdom (II Kings 14:25–28). Downfall and destruction were far from the minds of the masses in Jeroboam's day. Never had wealth and luxury been more common. None but a prophet could see the signs of decay and dare to utter a warning cry.

38. *The Day of Yahweh.*—Amos found current among his contemporaries a popular expectation of an approach-

[1] See J. M. Powis Smith, *Amos, Hosea, and Micah* (Bible for Home and School) (1914), pp. 5, 6.

ing Day of Yahweh. This Day was to usher in a period of glory for Israel as the chosen people of Yahweh. It was to be the beginning of a Golden Age, the restoration of the primeval Paradise. The enemies of Israel and of Yahweh were to be overthrown and Israel was to reign supreme among the nations of the earth. Prosperity was to abound on every hand and life be one continuous song. Amos laid hold of this popular conviction and made use of it for the purpose of his own message. He transformed the Day of Yahweh from a day of triumph into a day of doom.

> Woe unto you who are longing for the Day of Yahweh!
> For what end is your Day of Yahweh?
> It is darkness and not light.
> Even as when a man flees from before a lion,
> And a bear meets him,
> Or he enters a house and lays his hand upon the wall,
> And a serpent bites him.
> Will not the Day of Yahweh be darkness and not light,
> Even dense darkness and no brightness in it
> [Amos 5:18–20]?

This was a complete reversal of the popular conception of the Day of Yahweh. Instead of victory it would spell disaster. The prophet made use of his Day of Yahweh to frighten his people and turn them from the error of their ways, much as old-time evangelists preached hell to trembling sinners. Amos thus took hold of an ancient idea with no moral content and ethicized it, made it serve as reinforcement of his own moral passion. But this regeneration of the idea of the Day of Yahweh was only one element in his greater endeavor to ethicize the whole popular religion of his day. Amos is quite commonly called the "Creator of Ethical Monotheism."

This title is, perhaps, a bit too grandiose; but in any case, the work of Amos marked a great step forward in the development of ethical monotheism.

39. *Popular religion.*—To understand the significance of this term, ethical monotheism, we must see what it was that it was called upon to displace. The popular religion of the times of Amos held to Yahweh as one among many national gods, albeit the mightiest of them all. He could be counted upon to take his people's part against any and every foe, provided that his nation complied with his requirements. That he could or would abandon his people and leave them to the mercy of their foes, even though this might mean their destruction, was almost inconceivable to them. That he should go farther and himself bring about their destruction, was quite beyond the range of their imagination. This is explicitly stated by Micah as being the point of view of his contemporaries in the latter part of the eighth century. They say to him:

> Do not keep on prophesying such things.
> Shame cannot overtake the house of Jacob.
> Is the spirit of Yahweh straitened?
> Are such his doings?
> Do not his words mean good to Israel [Mic. 2:6, 7]?[1]

And again:

> Yet do they lean upon Yahweh and say,
> "Is not Yahweh in the midst of us?
> No disaster can befall us" [Mic. 3:11].

40. *The message of Amos.*—Amos attacked this position along two lines. First, he declared that Yahweh's

[1] For corrections of the text involved in this translation, see J. M. Powis Smith, *Micah* (*International Critical Commentary, in loc.*).

interests were not confined to Israel and Judah. His oracles against Damascus (1:3–5), Philistia (1:6–8), Ammon (1:13–15), and Moab (2:1–3)[1] presuppose Yahweh's interest in, and power over, those nations. It may be noticed also that they are denounced not solely for wrongs done to Israel, which would be quite consistent with the conception of Yahweh as a purely national God, but for violations of great human considerations which, particularly in the case of Philistia and more especially Ammon, have no apparent or immediate bearing upon Israel's interests. Besides that, the offenses of the nations denounced are not primarily theological; it is not that they worship other gods than Yahweh, but rather that they violate the commonly accepted rules of decency as applied to one nation's treatment of another. They set at naught the common human rights. But going still farther than that, Amos ventures to declare that Israel has no special claim on the favor of Yahweh. If she has been given privileges, they have but increased her responsibilities proportionately (Amos 3:2). Not only so, but the very favors of which she constantly boasts, have they not in equal measure been bestowed upon other nations, even upon peoples that have been fiercely hostile to Israel?

> Are you not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me,
> O house of Israel? says Yahweh.
> Did I not bring up Israel out of the land of Egypt,
> And the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from
> Kir [Amos 9:7]?

[1] The oracles against Tyre and Edom are of later origin. See W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, *in loc.*

Amos thus sweeps away Israel's special privilege at a stroke. Yahweh is God of the nations and treats all according as he wills and they deserve. Amos's second line of attack upon the popular position was directed against the common view that Yahweh was under obligation to help Israel because she had been loyal to him in the doing of his will. Amos apparently had no quarrel with the general principle involved in this. For him, as for the people, piety might be expected to yield prosperity. But he demanded a different type of piety. He emphasized different elements in religion from those stressed by the mass of his contemporaries. He enthroned ethics in the supreme place in religion; they divided the honors between ethics and ritual, with the greater emphasis, perhaps, on ritual.

41. *Character* vs. *ritual*.—It will hardly do to make Amos wholly discard ritual and put ethics in its place, as some interpreters would have us do.[1] Certainly, some of his statements in and of themselves might be so interpreted, for example:

> Come to Bethel, and transgress;
> To Gilgal, and multiply transgression!
> And bring your sacrifices every morning,
> And your tithes every three days!
> And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened,
> And proclaim free-will offerings and publish them:
> For this pleases you, O ye children of Israel [Amos 4:4 f.].

And again:

> I hate, I despise your feasts,
> And I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

[1] See W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea* (1905), pp. cxix f.

> Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them;
> Neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.
> Take away from me the noise of thy songs;
> For I will not hear the melody of thy viols.
> But let judgment roll down as waters,
> And righteousness as a perennial stream.
> Was it sacrifices and offerings that ye brought unto me
> Forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel
> [Amos 5:21–25]?

In determining the significance of such statements, they must be considered in the light of certain facts. Ancient Semitic religions were made up very largely of ritual; and Hebrew religion was no exception to this general rule. A religion without ritual would have been practically inconceivable to the Hebrew mind, and the prophets never ceased to be Hebrews. The idealistic character of the prophet must also be reckoned with. Amos was intent upon making his point and he spared no language in accomplishing his purpose. He painted conditions at their darkest and he stated his own ideals and standards at their strongest. His language must always be taken with allowance for the exaggeration characteristic of a man who is in dead earnest and convinced that he is pointing out the only way of deliverance. Other prophets, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, use equally strong language in reference to ritual, and yet the records of their work clearly show that they themselves made a certain place for ritual.[1] Indeed the utterances of Amos himself are not wholly without indications that he was not consistently hostile to ritual. He refers to the local shrines, the Nazirites, the institution of clean and

[1] See pp. 93 ff.

unclean, the new moon and the Sabbath at times (2:8, 11, 12; 7:17; 8:5) without any indication of disapproval. It is safer, therefore, to assume that Amos is protesting not against ritual per se, but against making ritual do service for character and right conduct.

42. *Righteousness and justice.*—Amos was pre-eminently a preacher of righteousness and justice. He might well be called the protagonist of the poor. His message is couched for the most part in the language of denunciation of the rich and powerful. His own ideals are largely to be inferred as the contrary of the things he denounces. It is noteworthy that much of what he decries had, in principle at least, and often in specific precept, been prohibited or warned against in the Covenant Code (see above, chap. iii, pp. 49–70). He charges the capitalists of his day with selling good men into slavery for lack of ability to pay a trifling debt (2:6; 8:6; cf. Exod. 21:30; 22:21, 24). They "buffet the heads of the poor" (2:7); and "trample" them into the dust (5:11). They violate the law of the land (Exod. 22:25 f.) by keeping the poor man's garment overnight when taken as security for a loan (2:8). They get the poor into their power in various and nefarious ways. They sell him poor grain (8:6), they "take exactions of wheat" from him, whatever that may mean (5:11), and they cheat him with false weights and measures (8:5). They bribe their judges (5:12), so that judgment is turned to wormwood and justice is set at naught (5:7; 6:3, 12). Even the women are so far gone in their craze for luxury that they urge their husbands on in their evil course of oppression (4:1, 2), to the end that they may have wherewith to indulge

themselves to the utmost in sensuous pleasures. The cause of the poor is so unpopular that no shrewd man will lift up his voice in their behalf (5:10, 13). Oppression and violence are abroad in the land (3:9, 10; 6:3) and such methods are so prevalent that there is no chance for the poor man:

> Hear this, O ye that trample upon the needy,
> And cause the poor of the land to cease [8:4].

All this was in direct violation of the spirit and letter of the Covenant Code, the recognized law of the land (Exod. 22:21–27; 23:1, 2, 6–9, 12).

Drunkenness was common (Amos 2:8, 12; 4:1) and a certain amount of sexual license (Amos 2:7; cf. Exod. 21:7 ff.). The wealth so cruelly wrung from the poor was expended in all kinds of luxury and riotous living (Amos 3:12 ff.; 4:1 ff.; 6:1 ff.). In the light of such conditions, Amos charges his rich contemporaries with unpardonable ignorance of the principles of right and wrong.

> They know not how to do right [3:10].

They are indifferent to the public welfare (6:4–6). He urges upon them a complete reversal of their conduct:

> Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live;
> That so Yahweh, the God of hosts, may be with you, as ye say.
> Hate the evil and love the good and establish judgment in the gate [5:14, 15].
>
> Let judgment roll down as waters,
> And righteousness as a perennial stream [5:24].

This is in Amos's mind the sure path to prosperity. The nation that heeds the requirements of Yahweh must prosper; piety and success are inseparable (cf. Amos 5:4–7).

43. *Amos's contribution* to the ethical progress of Israel was of two kinds. First, he made ethics the supreme concern of religion, the *sine qua non* of the divine favor. Secondly, he broadened the sphere of operation for Hebrew ethics. He made it clear that the moral obligations binding upon the Hebrews were, at least in certain special cases, obligatory likewise upon non-Hebraic nations such as Syria, Philistia, Moab, and Ammon. These would meet their doom not because they were non-Hebrew and non-Yahwistic, but because they were non-moral, or rather, immoral. In his standards for his own people, he seems not to have gone far, if at all, beyond the Covenant Code. There is nothing in principle new in the moral precepts of Amos. He never implies in the slightest degree that he is preaching a new moral code. The condemnation of his rich neighbors lies in the fact that they are setting at naught generally recognized laws and principles. But to stop here in the summary of Amos's moral message would be to make it too simple and to leave the most important thing unsaid.

Amos quite evidently was denouncing a social order. By the operation of the commonly accepted methods of doing business in a competitive way, and by working these methods to perfection, the weak were being driven to the wall. The rich were accumulating great wealth, which they spent in reckless luxury, while the poor were being deprived of the necessities of life. The days of Jeroboam II of Israel lay in a period which we should characterize as "good times." The long and wearing struggle with Syria had been brought to a successful conclusion, and a period of internal prosperity had set in.

War times are always hardest on the poor. During the peaceful times which followed, the rich had been rapidly widening the gulf between themselves and their less fortunate, or more scrupulous, brethren. Money breeds money; and with the aid of a little craft, the rich were reducing the poor almost to servitude—indeed in some cases the poor were actually sold into slavery. Amos saw clearly the drift of the times, and set himself earnestly and strenuously to stem the tide. That it was an economic situation for which nobody in particular was responsible made no difference in his prophetic eyes, which probably did not diagnose the situation economically, but were satisfied to evaluate it ethically. If cheating, stealing, bribery, and the like seem strong terms for the prophet to apply to a large section of the society of his day, let us remember that Amos was himself a poor man and that he had experienced for himself the hard lot of the poorer classes. The language used by Amos is relatively mild as compared with that to be found in the writings and speeches of some of the representatives of socialism and of labor in our own day. The "capitalist" may be a self-respecting citizen and a well-thought-of neighbor in his own group; but he is an incarnation of all that is evil in the present economic and social system as seen by radical reformers, and is given credit for the meanest motives and the most cruel economic measures by professional protagonists of the "proletariat." Many of the men belonging to the class attacked by Amos doubtless repudiated his charges with as much indignation and sincerity as the most rigid "bourbon" of the present day manifests in his protests of innocence and self-vindication. But Amos saw that

something was wrong, and though he may not have made an absolutely correct social or economic diagnosis of the ailment, he made it impossible for thoughtful and honest men henceforth to go on blindly ignoring the injustice that infected the whole social fabric.

44. *Hosea's ideals.*—A younger contemporary of Amos was Hosea, not an outsider, as was Amos, but a citizen of the Northern Kingdom. Conditions had developed rapidly in the few years that had passed since the preaching of Amos, and Hosea's message was addressed to this tenser situation. Hosea's primary interest differed from that of Amos in that he concerned himself chiefly with man's conception of God and his relationship to God, while Amos stressed almost exclusively man's relations to his fellow-man. Hosea's message is naturally, therefore, not social and ethical to the extent that Amos's was. Hosea makes not a single direct reference to the poor as such. He was more "religious" in his point of view than Amos, though he paid sufficient attention to moral issues to show that his religion was by no means indifferent to these things. He indorses blood-revenge in that he represents Yahweh as acting upon that principle[1] (1:4); he decries harlotry and adultery (2:5; 4:2, 13, 14, 18; 5:3; 7:4; 9:1); he denounces murder (4:2; 6:8, 9); he deplores the lack of truth, mercy, and knowledge of God (4:1) among his contemporaries; and he condemns perjury (4:2; 10:4), theft (4:2; 7:1), drunkenness (4:18), lying and deceit (7:1, 13; 11:12; 12:1), the breaking of contracts

[1] This custom was of long-time standing in Israel and was thus deep rooted in the social life and thought. Hence even the prophets approve it, strange as it may seem to us.

(4:2), burglary (7:1), the use of false balances (12:7), the practice of oppression (12:7), and the stealing of land by the removal of the landmarks (5:10). Like Amos, he will have none of ritual as a substitute for morals:

> I desire goodness and not sacrifice,
> And the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings [6:6].

It is Israel's tragedy that she has rejected the good (8:3), and that, therefore, "judgment springs up like hemlock in the furrows of the field" (10:4). Whatever goodness she has lacks depth; it is a mere fleeting emotion, too facile and superficial (6:4). The things that Yahweh wants are righteousness, justice, loving-kindness, mercy, and faithfulness (2:19, 20).

> Sow for yourselves righteousness;
> Reap the fruit of piety;
> Break up for yourselves an unused field of knowledge;
> Seek Yahweh, till the fruit of righteousness come to you [10:12].[1]

Such words as these show that for Hosea, even as for Amos, piety was expected to yield its reward. Piety ought to pay; and if prosperity is not being enjoyed it is clear that something is wrong with the piety. This was always the moral philosophy of the prophets; they and the people were of the same mind in expecting religion to pay good dividends; the only point of difference on this question was as to the brand of religion that should be practiced. The rewards looked for were very tangible and concrete (Hos. 2:18–23). The penalties for the lack of piety are equally realistic.

[1] Corrected in part after the Greek.

The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up;
His sin is laid up in store.
The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him;
He is an unwise son;
For now he should not stand in the place of the breaking
forth of children.
Shall I ransom them from the power of the grave?
Shall I redeem them from death?
O death, where are thy plagues?
O grave, where is thy destruction?
Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.
Though he be fruitful among his brethren,
An east wind shall come, the breath of Yahweh coming
up from the wilderness,
And his spring shall become dry,
And his fountain shall be dried up.
He shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.
Samaria will be laid waste;
For she has rebelled against her God.
They shall fall by the sword;
Their infants shall be dashed in pieces;
And their women with child shall be ripped up
[Hos. 13:12–16].

45. *Hosea's marriage.*—The most interesting part of the Book of Hosea is the story of his marriage in chapters 1–3. This has been the subject of much discussion extending over many centuries.[1] The most popular view at the present time is that which represents Hosea as having fallen in love with a young woman of sensuous tendencies, only to have her prove untrue to him and, after the birth of three children, of whom two at least were not Hosea's, desert him and take up her residence with another man. Notwithstanding all this, the great

[1] For the history of the interpretation of Hosea's marriage, see W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea* (1905), pp. 208–10.

love of Hosea leads him to buy his wife back from her paramour and to place her under restraint preparatory to receiving her back into his own home. This tragic experience Hosea looks back upon and interprets as Yahweh's call to him to become a prophet to Israel, who has treated Yahweh exactly as Gomer treated Hosea. So Hosea gets his message out of the agony of his own soul and personally discovers the truth that Yahweh's love for Israel has been cruelly spurned by his people.[1] The ethical significance of the record on such a basis would be very great. But attractive as the theory is, it will not bear close scrutiny, and must give way to a more natural and simple treatment of the story.[2]

The literal meaning of the story is clear enough, viz., that Hosea felt himself called upon by Yahweh to marry a notoriously bad woman and accordingly did so. From this marriage three children were born, each of whom, like the marriage itself, was made the occasion for a new sermon upon the same old theme, viz., that Yahweh will cast off his faithless people that has no sense of its obligation to its spiritual husband and lord, even Yahweh himself, and will send it into exile till such time

[1] For a full statement of this view, see W. R. Harper, *op. cit.*, pp. cxliii–cxlv; and G. A. Smith, *Book of the Twelve*, I, 232–52.

[2] For a fuller discussion of the marriage from the literal point of view here followed, see J. M. Powis Smith, *The Prophet and His Problems* (1914), pp. 109–36, and *idem*, *Amos, Hosea and Micah* (1914), pp. 77–82. B. Duhm, *Israels Propheten* (1916), pp. 98 f., now takes the same literal point of view, but makes Hosea marry in succession *two* wives of the same type. Similar literal views are presented also by C. H. Toy, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXXII, 75–79; and D. Buzy, *Revue biblique* for 1917, pp. 376–423. Cf. G. A. Barton, *The Religion of Israel* (1918), pp. 99 f.; and G. Hölscher, *Geschichte der israelitischen und jüdischen Religion* (1922), p. 106.

as it shall awake to the advantages of its former relationship and shall long for its resumption. The ethical principle involved is very simple and clear, viz., that it is the part of a true wife to abide loyally by her own husband and to have naught to do with any other man. But in addition to this obvious and intended teaching as applied to the duty of Israel toward Yahweh, there are also some incidental facts of some significance. How could Hosea ever have entertained the conviction that Yahweh wanted him to marry a harlot? This is in reality no more difficult from the moral approach than it is to suppose that he thought of Yahweh as having led him blindfolded into such a match only to break his heart. For Yahweh to order him to marry a harlot is, at any rate, no worse than for Yahweh to order him to marry a charming girl who, as Yahweh knows right well, will turn out to be wholly unworthy of his love and untrue to her marital obligations. Further, to think of Yahweh as commanding marriage with a harlot is no more difficult or abhorrent than to think of him as inspiring four hundred prophets to lie (I Kings 22:20–23), or as hardening Pharaoh's heart to the end that he might destroy him (Exod. 7:3, 4; 10:1), or as moving David to number Israel in order that he might be justified in punishing him, and then punishing him by slaying great numbers of his innocent people (II Sam. 24:1 ff.). Nor was the marriage itself more extraordinary than some other acts performed by early prophets. The psychology of a prophet was not that of the normal layman. He was nearer being abnormal than normal at times. Indeed the early Hebrews used the same word to express both the idea of prophecy and that of insanity. The

more sensational an act was the greater its homiletic or prophetic value (cf. Ezek. 4:9–15; 24:16–18; Isa. 20:1–4; Jer. 16:1 f.). The extraordinary character of the marriage gave it its value as a prophetic deed. It compelled attention and focused interest in such a way as to afford the prophet wide scope for the preaching of the message he sought to impress upon Israel through his marriage.

We cannot give our farewell to Hosea without noting one element of his character that is forcefully illustrated by his marriage.

> This interpretation of the marriage experience emphasizes the self-sacrifice of Hosea. He looks upon himself as belonging wholly to his people and to his God. There is no sacrifice for the good of Israel or for the service of Yahweh that can be called too great. He is a willing tool in Yahweh's hands, absolutely submissive to Yahweh's will. Shall the clay say to him who molds it, "What makest thou?" [Isa. 45:9]. . . . . The man who could take upon himself a relationship like that and could exploit his act for the education of the public was not only utterly self-abasing and self-effacing in his devotion to his country, but was evidently endowed with a strongly dramatic temperament. This, combined with the inherent value of his message, succeeded in impressing his preaching deeply upon the consciousness of Israel so that it became a permanent element in Hebrew religion.[1]

46. *Social message of Isaiah.*—We hear the social note clearly again in the oracles of Isaiah. Isaiah's lot was cast in troublous times. His preaching years extended from 740 B.C. to 701 B.C. at least. In these years he lived through the Syro-Ephraimitish War (735–734 B.C.), the fall of Damascus (732 B.C.), the siege and fall of Samaria (721 B.C.), Sargon's campaign against Ashdod (711 B.C.),

[1] J. M. Powis Smith, *Amos, Hosea and Micah* (1914), pp. 81 ff.

and Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (701 B.C.). The Assyrian Empire, under four of its greatest kings, Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser IV, Sargon II, and Sennacherib, was remaking the map of Western Asia. Syria and Northern Israel had become provinces of the Assyrian Empire; and Judah, after surrendering its independence to Assyria, broke out in futile revolt against her only to be reduced again to submission and subjected to heavy penalties. Amid such scenes, the work of Isaiah was inevitably national rather than individualistic in its scope and interests.

We discover here again that interest in the welfare of the poor which was so conspicuous in Amos and so deficient in Hosea:

> Cease to do evil; learn to do good;
> Seek justice; repress violence;
> Give justice to the fatherless; plead the cause of the widow [Isa. 1:16, 17].

> But you—ye uproot the vineyard,
> The plunder of the poor is in your houses.
> What mean ye that ye crush my people,
> And grind the faces of the poor [3:14, 15]?

> Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees,
> And recorders who record trouble,
> So as to turn aside the poor from judgment,
> And to rob the poor of my people of justice,
> So that widows become their spoil,
> And they plunder the fatherless [10:1, 2].

The methods by which the rich and powerful impoverish the poorer classes are clearly suggested not only here but in other passages likewise. They are the familiar, age-long means of oppression, already exposed by Amos.

A servile court is only too ready to do the bidding of the rich and is not without its reward.

> They acquit the guilty in return for a bribe,
> And the vindication of the innocent they turn aside from him [5:23].

Bribery and corruption are the tools of their trade (cf. 1:21, 23, 26). By these and other means, represented in modern times by exorbitant interest, foreclosure of mortgages on the instant, controlling the market and the like, the poor man has been driven from his little patrimony and left landless and homeless, while the rich oppressors

> Add house to house and field to field
> Till there is no more room [5:8].

The economic and social problem raised by the increase of large landed estates was evidently being keenly felt; and the essential wrong of one man owning extensive acres at the expense of other men who lost all they had appeals powerfully to the prophet's sense of justice.

The possession of so much ill-gotten wealth by a relatively small class of people had its natural effect. In Isaiah's judgment, there was a general moral breakdown. Personal morality was on the decline. Violence and bloodshed were abroad in the land (5:7); drunkenness and debauchery were the order of the day (5:11, 22, 23; 22:13), and the women have nothing better to do than to spend time and money upon lavish personal adornment of which they are sinfully proud (2:16–24). The concomitant of such a situation is that the moral sense is becoming dulled; there is a lack of keen moral discrimination and a general unresponsiveness to idealistic instruction and a smug self-satisfaction.

Woe to those who call badness good and goodness bad,
That regard darkness as light, and light as darkness,
That consider bitter sweet, and sweet bitter.
Woe to the wise in their own eyes,
And intelligent in their own sight [5:20, 21].

The response of such people to the warning of danger is but to plunge deeper into debauchery and say flippantly:

Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die [22:13]!

They have indeed become deaf to all appeals (6:9–13).

The inevitable reaction from all this, as Isaiah declares, will be a general overturning of social values, which he describes in such a vivid way as almost to suggest that he had the bolshevistic society of Russia before his mind's eye (3:1–5). Destruction and that complete is the only possible outcome of the existing situation; naught else can result from such unmitigated wickedness:

For wickedness burns up like a fire which devours briars
and thorns,
And kindles in the thickets of the forest,
And clouds of smoke roll up [9:17].

47. *Isaiah and ritual.*—Isaiah's attitude toward ritual should be particularly noted, because it is so clear and so representative of the prophets in general:

Hear the word of Yahweh,
Ye rulers of Sodom;
Give ear unto the instruction of our God,
Ye people of Gomorrah.
To what end is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me,
saith Yahweh.
I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams,
And the fat of fed beasts;
And I delight not in the blood of bullocks,

Or of lambs, or of he-goats.
When you come to appear before me,
Who has required this at your hand—
The trampling of my courts?
Bring no more vain oblations;
It is an offering of abomination unto me;
New moon and sabbath, the holding of assemblies.
I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn meeting.
Your new moons and your appointed seasons
My soul hates;
They are a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.
And when you spread forth your hands,
I will hide mine eyes from you;
Yea, when you make many prayers,
I will not hear;
Your hands are full of blood.
Wash you, make you clean,
Put away the evil of your doings
From before mine eyes.
Cease to do evil;
Learn to do good;
Seek justice, relieve the oppressed;
Judge the fatherless;
Plead for the widow [1:10–17].

There is little of the prophetic language as pronounced as this in its hostility to the practice of the cultus as it was then in vogue. Yet it would be a great error to charge Isaiah with any desire to do away with ritual and substitute for it good works in the field of ethics. This is clear from his remarks here regarding prayer. Certainly Isaiah would not abolish prayer. Rather he desires that the prayers may come from clean hearts and lips. A just and generous life is the necessary background of true religion; and ceremonial, no matter how generous

and elaborate, cannot take the place of true and upright living. This is far from saying that ritual may not be a helpful concomitant of piety. Indeed, it evidently was so in Isaiah's own case. For the great initial experience that sent him forth into a prophetic career was staged in the temple (chap. 6), and reflects a mind very responsive to the influence of dignified and majestic forms.

48. *Isaiah's call.*—This account of Isaiah's call (chap. 6) is an eloquent witness to the high sense of obligation that possessed Isaiah's soul. Not every young man of position and influence saw the weakness of the religious and social systems of his day; and of the few who may have seen it, only an Isaiah or a Micah felt called upon to undertake the task of calling his contemporaries to the search for higher and better things. Visions of Yahweh calling for volunteers to self-denying service were vouchsafed only to the high-minded and large-hearted. It is ethically significant that this vision sees Yahweh as the great destroyer. His holiness is a terrible, cleansing agency that removes sin by destroying the sinner. The primitive metaphysical conception of holiness as the essence of deity in distinction from humanity, as that which makes God to be God, is very clear in this vision; but it is also clear that we have here a long step in the direction of ethicizing the quality of holiness so that it shall become an effective ally of righteousness. At least Isaiah goes forth, after this vision of the thrice holy Yahweh, to call his people to social righteousness and purity of life.

49. *Piety and prosperity.*—Isaiah's conception of the value of righteousness to a people is one with that of

the other prophets. Piety is the key to prosperity. This appears throughout his preaching; but is most clearly expressed in this passage:

> Come now, let us reason together, says Yahweh.
> If your sins be as scarlet,
> Can they be white like snow?
> If they be red like crimson,
> Can they be like wool?
> If you be willing and hearken,
> The good of the land you shall eat;
> But if you refuse and rebel,
> On husks you shall feed [1:18, 19].[1]

The point of this is, of course, that it is unreasonable, yea preposterous, to expect to go on in sin and yet to be treated by Yahweh as though they were paragons of virtue; the only royal road to prosperity is the way of piety.

50. *Social ideals of Micah.*—The prophecy of the eighth century closed with Micah, whose activity fell around the invasion of 701 B.C.[2] Only three chapters of the book carrying his name can with any certainty be credited to Micah himself—the rest are probably of later origin.[3] But these three chapters are full of social and ethical passion. Micah's sermons reflect the same facts and glow with the same ideals as those of

[1] For the translation of the last line, see Gray, *ICC*, *in loc.* The interrogative rendering of lines 3 and 5 seems to me demanded by the logic of the passage, notwithstanding Dr. Burney's argument that a question without an interrogative particle is never found in the apodosis of a conditional sentence (*Journal of Theological Studies*, XI, 433–35). The lack of such another instance may be purely fortuitous; there is nothing in principle to prevent such a usage.

[2] See J. M. Powis Smith, *Micah* (*ICC*), pp. 19 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 8–16.

Amos and Isaiah. Amos lived on the slopes overlooking the Dead Sea; Isaiah dwelt in Jerusalem itself; Micah's home was on the western slope overlooking the Mediterranean. Thus we have witnesses to the social conditions and ideals in all parts of the little country of Judah.

The central difficulty with the attitude of his people as Micah saw it lay in the fact that they were unable to imagine Yahweh as capable of anything but kindness and protection toward them. They were discharging the routine obligations of the cultus and keeping the letter of the law, and felt themselves thereby entitled to the reward of Yahweh's favor. If a god be not gracious to his worshipers, why worship him? So they expostulate with the prophet:

> Do not keep harping upon such things.
> Shame cannot overtake the house of Jacob.
> Is Yahweh impatient, or are such his deeds?
> Do not his words mean good to Israel [2:6, 7]?

They are guilty of all kinds of antisocial conduct and yet they count upon Yahweh's approval and co-operation:

> Hear this, now, ye heads of the house of Jacob,
> And rulers of the house of Israel;
> Who abhor justice,
> And pervert all that is right;
> Who build Zion with blood,
> And Jerusalem with iniquity.
> Her chiefs judge for a bribe,
> And her priests give oracles for hire,
> And her prophets divine for money;
> Yet upon Yahweh they lean, saying,
> "Is not Yahweh in the midst of us?
> No evil can befall us" [3:9–11].

51. *Idea of God.*—It was the task of Micah, just as it was that of Amos and Isaiah, to socialize and ethicize the popular conception of God. The people of the eighth century B.C. were not deficient in religion; their need was rather for a richer and more humanized religion. The prophets brought all the authority and power of the God-idea to the support and re-enforcement of their demand for social conduct. Micah denounces the wrongs of his day not merely as antisocial, but also and primarily as offensive to God. He charges the rich and ruling class with driving the peasant from his land (2:1f.) and ejecting the poor from their homes (2:1, 2, 9), with plundering the public (2:8; 3:2), and with being fundamentally hostile to everything good and set upon all that is bad (2:1ff.; 3:1ff.). Even the professional servants of God, the priests and the prophets, are slaves to the greed for gain, which they satisfy by the prostitution of their calling to the desires of the rich (3:5–8, 11). For all these things Yahweh will bring them into judgment:

> Therefore, on your account,
> Zion will be ploughed as a field,
> And Jerusalem will become ruins,
> And the mountain of the house a high place in a forest
> [3:12].

52. *Idealism of prophets.*—Looking back upon these pictures of conditions in the eighth century B.C. as painted by the prophets, we must raise the question as to whether or not we are to take the prophetic statements and descriptions as literally matter of fact. We must remember that the prophets were idealists and that to the idealist, reality is always very distressing and depressing. Were the common citizens and their rulers in

Israel and Judah as wholly bad, as completely selfish, as restricted and materialistic in their outlook as the prophets represent them to have been? May not the prophets in the excess of their enthusiasm for their ideals have painted existing conditions a little blacker than they really were? Is not this a common homiletic failing? The reason for raising this question is that the citizens of Samaria at the time of its downfall held out against the mighty Assyrian army for a period of almost three years. Similarly the men of Jerusalem withstood Sennacherib's army stubbornly. These facts argue for courage and determination on the part of the defenders. They are convincing proof of the existence of a high morale among the Jewish people. The contemporaries of the eighth-century prophets may not have been idealists after the prophet's own heart, but they were sturdy, liberty-loving patriots who knew how to fight to the finish for their home and country. We need not despise or underestimate the character of these plain men of homely habits and monotonous manners in order to appreciate properly their critics, the great prophets. It is the imperishable glory of these greater souls that they were filled with a divine discontent which led them to abjure the lure of present comfort and to press on to the attainment of a better social order. The ideals they cherished did not die with them, but continued to be the inspiration of succeeding generations.

CHAPTER V

THE PROPHETS OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY

53. *The seventh century in Israel* was a period of stirring events. Beginning right after the tragedy of Sennacherib's invasion in 701 B.C., it closed just before the first deportation from Judah in 597 B.C. Between these outstanding termini there came in swift succession Assurbanipal's invasion of Egypt and the resulting downfall of Thebes (666 B.C.); the Scythian invasion of Western Asia and Egypt (*ca.* 625 B.C.); Pharaoh Necho's invasion of Western Asia, involving the battle of Megiddo, in which King Josiah of Judah was slain (608 B.C.), and the battle of Carchemish, in which Egypt was finally repulsed (604 B.C.); and the downfall of Assyria, with the capture of Nineveh by the Medes and Babylonians, in 607 B.C. While these great events were taking place without, within Judah was in a state of turmoil. After the withdrawal of Sennacherib, Judah sorely stricken as she was, found it hard to keep a vital faith in Yahweh, and under Manasseh and Amon there set in a period of religious and moral reaction, during which there was a vigorous recrudescence of old pagan practices, the thought being that since Yahweh had failed to protect his people it would be well to revert to older customs and to seek the aid of mightier gods. But under Josiah, the prophetic ideals once more found recognition. They were voiced by Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, and were in part enacted into law and made operative by the Deuteronomic reformation in 621 B.C.

We shall leave the work of the Deuteronomists for a separate chapter, and take up here the prophetic ethics as expressed in the later additions to J and E, in the utterances of the prophets just named, and in the facts recorded in the history of the century as told in the second Book of Kings.

54. *Israel and foreign nations.*—In such a century as this was, with Israel continuously at the mercy of foreign powers, it is natural to find in its literature a very definite attitude toward foreigners. Invaded by Assyrians and forced to pay heavy annual tribute, threatened and perhaps raided by Scythians, reduced to vassalage and robbed of its king by Egypt, and finally compelled to accept Babylonian suzerainty and see large groups of its citizens and its last king carried into exile, its capital city rendered defenseless, and its holy temple destroyed, it would be passing strange if feelings of hostility, resentment, and revenge had not found lodgment in the heart of Israel. And they are not lacking. Nor are Yahweh or Israel thought of in general as under obligation of any sort to non-Hebraic peoples. Jacob prays Yahweh to deliver him from the just wrath of Esau and is delivered (Gen. 32:9–12). The slaughter of Egypt's first-born is but tit-for-tat in return for Egypt's slaughter of the Hebrew first-born (Exod. 4:22, 23). Israel is Yahweh's own choice possession (Exod. 19:3 ff.), and thus entitled to special favor as over against non-Yahwistic peoples. Indeed, Yahweh's reputation among the nations of the world depends upon his preserving his own people from destruction (Num. 14:12–19). On the other hand, it is perfectly proper for him to harden Pharaoh's heart, to the end that he may have full war-

rant for destroying him and his people (Exod. 4:21 f.). It should be noted here that Yahweh cannot be thought of as destroying a people without moral justification for the act, even if he does have to furnish that justification by his own initiative. Yahweh has no scruples about undertaking to "blot out the remembrance of the Amalekites under heaven" (Exod. 17:14). Zephaniah does not hesitate to announce a world-wide destruction and devastation from which only loyal Yahweh-worshipers may escape (Zeph. 1:2 ff., 18; 3:8).

The continuous domination of Israel by the foreigner presented a problem to the Yahweh-worshipers which they were not slow to recognize. Nahum and many other orthodox souls found great relief and comfort in contemplating the fall of Nineveh, marking the end of the Assyrian Empire. In Nahum there appears a certain fiery form of indignation against Judah's ancient foe, which exhibits a degree of animosity for which the great ethical prophets furnish no parallel. The pent-up feelings of generations of suffering patriots here burst forth into flame. The whole prophecy is a paean of triumph over a prostrate foe and breathes out the spirit of exultant revenge. In Nahum, a representative of the old, narrow, and shallow prophetism finds his place in the Canon of Scripture. His point of view is essentially one with that of such men as Hananiah (Jer., chap. 28), the four hundred prophets in opposition to Micaiah ben Imlah (I Kings, chap. 22), and the so-called "false prophets" in general. For such prophets, the relation between Yahweh and his nation Israel was indissoluble. Yahweh might become angered at his people and give them over temporarily into the power of the foe.

But he could no more wholly abandon them than a mother could desert her child. The obligation upon Israel was to be loyal to Yahweh as he was loyal to her; to eschew all foreign cults; to perform the cultus of Yahweh with zealous adherence to all of its requirements; and to conform to the traditional customs and ethics of the community. The possibility that "new occasions might teach new duties," that the advancing civilization with its more complex life might render the old usages and laws inadequate, and that Yahweh might care more for full justice and overflowing mercy than for the blood of bulls and goats, had not been realized by them. The teaching that for a lack of fundamental, ethical qualities Yahweh was intending to bring destruction upon his nation was branded by them as treason both to Israel and to Yahweh. Patriotism and religion combined in requiring the belief that Yahweh was able and willing to deliver his people out of every danger. Never could he suffer the adherents of other gods to triumph permanently over his own people. Never could the land of Judah and the temple of Yahweh be desecrated by being abandoned to the possession of the heathen. Nor could insult and injury to Yahweh and his people be allowed by him to go unavenged. To men of such a way of thinking, the prospect of the downfall of Nineveh would bring a joy without alloy. The prophecy of Nahum is a faithful transcript of the thoughts and feelings of a prophet with such a point of view. The overthrow of Nineveh not only brought to Nahum and those of like mind satisfaction of the natural, human desire for vengeance, but it also enabled them to justify the ways of God to men. Such objective dem-

onstration of the justice of Yahweh was essential to the validity of their theology. By such vindication of Yahweh and his people, faith in Yahweh was made possible for them. Hence, the joy of Nahum is not only and merely exultation over a fallen foe, it is also the glad cry of an assured faith in the God of the fathers.[1]

Jeremiah throughout his lifetime was at loggerheads with his generation over the proper attitude to assume toward the dominant world-power. The people of Judah were liberty-loving mountaineers. They groaned under the foreign yoke, and they improved every opportunity to strike a blow for freedom. This seemed to them to be not only the part of true patriots, but also that of loyal servants of Yahweh. It could not be the will of Yahweh that they should supinely submit to the rule of idolaters, denying and defying the authority of the true God. To people holding such views the utterances of Jeremiah seemed in the highest degree unpatriotic, disloyal, and irreligious; for Jeremiah from first to last counseled non-resistance and a full acceptance of the sway of Babylon. Even after the contest was openly joined and the Babylonian army was on the soil of Judah, Jeremiah persisted in urging upon his countrymen the necessity of surrendering to the Babylonian. We who have just come through a great war and remember keenly how the pacifist and pro-German were regarded and treated by public sentiment and official procedure can easily understand that Jeremiah's advice to the men of Jerusalem to desert to the enemy and give up

[1] J. M. Powis Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Micah, Zephaniah and Nahum* (*International Critical Commentary*) (New York: Scribners, 1911), pp. 281 f.

the struggle was bitterly resented by the leaders of the gallant but futile struggle for freedom. The wonder is, not that Jeremiah was arrested as a deserter and imprisoned, but that he was not put to death. But Jeremiah was convinced that Judah was so sunk in iniquity that Yahweh could do nothing less than send the nation into exile. He saw that Babylonia was indubitably the mistress of the world and he explained it as due to the will of Yahweh, who was using Babylon, even as he had used Assyria, as the rod of his punitive wrath. At the outset of his ministry, like Zephaniah, he had assigned this function of punishing the wicked world to the Scythians. But they had failed him and he apparently retired into seclusion until the Babylonian Kingdom came to the fore and furnished him with the instrument of wrath which he saw that his people needed.

55. *The message of Habakkuk.*—The most significant contribution to thought during this period upon the subject of Israel's subjection to foreign powers was made by Habakkuk. The common thought of the day attributed all of Judah's misfortune to the sins of Manasseh and his generation (II Kings 23:26; 24:3). Jeremiah saw that such an interpretation was paralyzing all aspiration and effort toward better things, for few men of any age would keep themselves firmly loyal to their ideals if they became convinced that they and their generation were doomed to suffer irremediable disaster because of the sins of a former generation. Jeremiah, therefore, never wearied of driving home the message that his contemporaries need look no farther back than their own times to discover justification for all that they were suffering. Their own wickedness was so great that

national overthrow was inevitable. But this did not wholly satisfy the mind of Habakkuk. He protests to Yahweh that the land is given over into the hand of the wicked and that Yahweh seems deaf to the cry of his children (1:2–4). The wicked oppressors of whom he complains seem most naturally to be the rich and powerful among his own countrymen. To this cry Yahweh replies that he is about to raise up the Chaldeans to punish these wicked oppressors (1:5). But this answer does not commend itself to Habakkuk, for he realizes that the wickedness of the Chaldean makes that of Judah pale into insignificance beside it. He pushes his problem further, therefore, and demands how a just God, such as Yahweh is, can tolerate the unceasing oppression and exploitation of his own people by a foreign people that is indescribably more wicked (1:12–17). To this further question Yahweh makes an answer that finds its climax in the well-known verse:

> Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him
> But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness [2:4].

This answer, being interpreted, is to the effect that the Chaldean (i.e., the neo-Babylonian) power is essentially weak and will therefore fall, not having that moral sincerity and simplicity of soul that guarantee permanence; but that the people of Judah, being righteous and in so far as they are righteous, will persist and flourish by reason of their steadfastness. The word commonly rendered "faith" here is rather "faithfulness," "trustworthiness"; it almost amounts to integrity.[1]

At first thought we might say that Habakkuk made no contribution to Hebrew thought upon the problem

[1] For different interpretations of Hab. 1:2–11, cf. Nowack, Marti, Stonehouse, *et al.*

of life. Does he not merely repeat what all his predecessors have said, viz., that piety insures prosperity and that sin spells disaster? But that would be to fail in recognizing the full value of Habakkuk's message. In the first place, Habakkuk's insistence upon thinking his problem through shows that a prophet did not necessarily conceive of himself as abandoning his right to think for himself when he became a spokesman of Yahweh. Nor did he regard himself as under bonds to accept the interpretations of experience that had been handed down from the past, even though they bore the seal of prophetic authority. He claimed the right to ask questions and to receive answers that would satisfy the demands of his intelligence. That Habakkuk should have established the right to freedom of thought in the field of ethics and religion, and that his thoughtful inquiry should have so commended itself to the Jewish mind as to have been finally granted a place in the Canon of Scripture, is no mean praise for an otherwise unknown prophet. Further, Habakkuk's enunciation of the theory that piety pays in the long run was not merely a repetition of the teaching of previous prophets. At least, he did not repeat it just because it was the custom to hold such a view. His declaration of this teaching rested upon the basis of his own experience. He had thought and prayed the thing through for himself. It was his own conviction and not merely a part of his mental and moral heritage. Moreover, he based this teaching not only upon the divine dictum, but also upon the nature of things. It was his conviction that the false, the shallow, the morally perverse carried within itself the seeds of its own ruin; whereas righteousness

was in accordance with the fundamental nature of things and must therefore win through to vindication. Thus Habakkuk's philosophy of life, though it was in its outcome essentially the same as that of his fathers, was in the first place his very own achievement; he gained it for himself by the sweat of his soul; it was no conventional or consuetudinary religion or morals; it was his own personal discovery. In the second place, it was not conceived of by him merely as a gift from God which had been passively received by him, but was rather something that had come to him or rather sprung up in him as the product of his own agonizing thought upon the conditions of his day; it was a thing approved both by his reason and his conscience.

The remainder of the original prophecy of Habakkuk (2:5–11, 15–17) consists of a series of woes upon the oppressive world-ruler.[1] The abuse of his power through his pride and greed in robbery, murder, treachery, and violence of every sort will react upon the oppressor himself. Yahweh is the director of the moral universe and right will avenge itself upon the head of the world-tyrant. It is especially noteworthy that nowhere in these woes is there any citation of a wrong against Jews as such, but rather that the tyrant is condemned and threatened for his violation of fundamental human rights and principles. Of course, the animus of the writer against this oppressor is aroused by the fact that the Jewish people have endured much at the tyrant's hands, but the note of personal or national vengeance is submerged in the chorus of protest against the tyrant's ruthless disregard of considerations of humanity as a whole.

[1] For the text of 2:5, cf. the commentaries cited on p. 106.

56. *Moral character of Yahweh.*—When we turn to our seventh-century sources for consideration of their moral standards in general, we find no lack of materials. The approaching downfall of Judah furnished the prophets with an inexhaustible theme. The sorrows and sufferings of Judah have been brought on by the sins of Judah, and in the catalogues of sin violations of the moral law are constantly enumerated. But before taking up the prophetic estimate of the moral standards, achievements, and failures of Judah, we must see what was the seventh century's conception of the moral character of Yahweh, in so far as it is indicated in the writings from that age.

We naturally learn that "Yahweh is righteous within her [i.e., Jerusalem]; he will not do wrong; morning by morning he establishes his justice; light fails not" (Zeph. 3:5). That is to say, Yahweh acts with the same unfailing regularity in the moral order of the world as in the order of the physical universe.[1] He punishes sin, even in the persons of the descendants of the actual offenders, and he will by no means clear the guilty (Num. 14:18; Nah. 1:2, 3). He is the judge of the moral order and distributes his rewards and punishments according to the deserts of men, being able as God to read the secrets of men's hearts and to penetrate all deceptive disguises (Jer. 17:9, 10). His wrath against sin is fearfully destructive, stopping not at the destruction of the human race (with the exception of Noah and his family) and venting itself even upon inanimate nature (Gen. 6:5–8; 7:4, 22 f.; Nah. 1:6). He is jealous of his own exclusive rights and privileges and resents encroachment thereon, either

[1] See my *Commentary on Zephaniah* (*ICC*), *in loc.*

by men (Gen. 3:22–24) or by rival gods (Exod. 32:7–10). But he is not implacable (Jer. 3:12; Nah. 9:24). He is sorry that he sent a flood upon mankind when he smells the odor of the burnt-offering made by Noah (Gen. 8:21 f.) and he "repents" of the evil that he had rashly purposed against Israel when Moses reasons with him in pleading for his people (Exod. 32:7–14). Indeed, he predicts disaster through his prophets primarily in order that the people may be turned from the error of their ways and so escape destruction (Jer. 18:6–10). The approach to his favor is not by the sacrificial or ritualistic route, but rather by the way of obedience to his precepts as expounded by the prophets (Jer. 6:20; 7:21–26). The general nature of these is suggested by the characterization of Yahweh given in Exodus 34:6, 7:

> Yahweh is a merciful and gracious God,
> Slow to anger and plenteous in loving-kindness and truth;
> Keeping loving-kindness for thousands,
> Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin;
> But he will by no means clear the guilty,
> Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children
> And upon the children's children, upon the third and the fourth generations.

And again in Jeremiah 9:23 f.:

> Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom;
> Neither let the mighty man glory in his strength;
> Let not the rich man glory in his riches.
> But let him that would glory glory in this,
> That he understands and knows me,
> That I am Yahweh who exercises mercy,
> Justice and righteousness in the earth;
> For in these things I delight,
> Says Yahweh.

See also Numbers 14:18.

In surveying this sketch of the moral aspects of the divine nature, we see at once that, as has been suggested before (pp. 7, 30), the God-idea reflects the achievements and limitations of the human personality. This is in some respects a very humanized God. Even as the men of the seventh century had not become completely ethicized, so their God-concept was not as yet lifted to a consistently ethical plane. But the ethical elements are the dominant ones so far as Yahweh's relations with men are principally concerned, and the influence of the worship of such a God could not but make for moral betterment and the enrichment of individual and social life.

57. *Social ideals.*—From the standpoint of the prophets, the social morality of the seventh century was at low ebb. Habakkuk, speaking of conditions at the end of the century, says:

> How long, O Yahweh, have I cried, and thou dost not hear?
> I cry out unto thee of violence and thou dost not deliver.
> Wherefore dost thou show me iniquity and dost thou look upon wickedness?
> And devastation and violence are before me, and there is strife, and contention lifts up [its voice].
> Therefore law is relaxed and judgment never goes forth.
> For the wicked circumvents the righteous; and so judgment goes forth distorted [Hab. 1:2–4].

Zephaniah at an earlier period speaks in similar tones of condemnation:

> I will punish the princes and the king's sons,
> Who fill their master's house with violence and deceit.
> And I will punish every one who leaps over the threshold,
> And every one who clothes himself with foreign raiment [1:8, 9].

And again:

> Her princes within her are roaring lions.
> Her judges are evening wolves; they have left nothing till the morning.
> Her prophets are reckless men of treachery.
> Her priests have profaned the holy; they have done violence to law [3:3, 4].

A similar condemnation of the prophets is frequently on Jeremiah's lips (5:31; 6:14; 29:23). Taking a totally different attitude from theirs toward the great problems and policies of the day, he does not hesitate to make them out to be liars, deceivers, self-seekers, and adulterers. They and the priests, the two classes officially responsible for the right interpretation of the will of Yahweh and the proper administration of his law, are charged by Jeremiah with being in an evil partnership for the purpose of ruling Judah according to their own evil purposes (5:31). Things have gone so far that the priests even dare to introduce into the temple-ritual practices alien to Yahweh-worship, and the official scribes have produced a perverted version of the ancient law of Yahweh (Jer. 7:31; 8:8; 19:5; cf. Ezek. 20:25).[1]

With the religious and moral leadership of Judah in such unscrupulous hands, it is only to be expected that the conduct of the common people and rulers would be cut on the same pattern. Josiah's reform found human sacrifice being practiced in honor of Molech[2] and did

[1] Jeremiah's attitude toward the Deuteronomic reform is not clear; it may be that in 8:8 he was casting reflections upon the new edition of the law promulgated in connection with Josiah's reform.

[2] Probably this name was purposely changed from Melek (=king) in order to suggest the word bosheth (=shame), even as Meribbaal was later changed into Mephibosheth (II Sam. 4:4; cf. I Chron. 8:34; 9:40).

away with it (II Kings 23:10). It need hardly be pointed out that the practice of human sacrifice, at least when the victims are the children of the sacrificers, forever silences the charge that these people took their religion lightly, that it merely was a mechanical routine of ritual. The ancient Hebrews loved their children in a perfectly normal way[1] and no more trying test of sincerity in religious zeal could be imposed than the demand to offer a child as a burnt offering. On the other hand, such a custom testifies to a total disregard of the right of every person to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It sacrifices the individual in behalf of the social welfare, regardless of the individual's willingness to be so utilized. With such crude conceptions of the rights of personality current among the people and with such crass conceptions of the will of God, it is natural to find the prophets passing damnatory judgment upon their generation. Jeremiah even declares them to be beyond hope:

> And if thou say in thy heart:
> "Wherefore have these things befallen me?"
> Because of the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts uncovered,
> And thy heels suffer violence.
> Can the Ethiopian change his skin,
> Or the leopard his spots?
> Then may ye also do good
> That are wont to do evil [Jer. 13:22, 23].

In dramatic fashion, Jeremiah maintains that there is not a single righteous man in Jerusalem; rich and poor, high and low, all alike have broken away from the

[1] Witness David's grief over Bathsheba's son, and again over the death of Absalom, ungrateful as the latter was.

restraints of righteousness (Jer. 5:1 ff.). As a convincing proof of the religious and moral degradation of the people, Jeremiah cites the fact that widows and fatherless children have no defenders, but are made the prey of the ravenous greed of the day (Jer. 5:28; 22:3; cf. Exod. 22:21 ff.).

58. *Slavery.*—Another wrong that kindled Jeremiah's wrath was the treatment accorded slaves in his day. When the Babylonian army was pressing hard upon Jerusalem, the leaders of the city declared all slaves free. This was probably, like most human actions, done from mixed motives. There may have been a hope that this would placate the angry Yahweh and lead him to fight for Judah against her foes. There may also have been present the thought that the defense of the city would be strengthened, if a body of discontented slaves were converted into a contingent of grateful citizens. Then, too, the provisioning of the city was daily becoming more difficult and the slave-owners may have been glad to have fewer mouths to feed. But whatever motives led them to free the slaves, when the Babylonian army was temporarily withdrawn in order to meet the advancing forces from Egypt, the emancipation of the slaves was immediately canceled and they were once more reduced to servitude (Jer. 34:8–22).

59. *Poor and weak.*—Though Jeremiah and the prophets in general always took up the cause of the poor and weak, it would be a mistake to suppose that they were uncritical defenders of the defenseless or unappreciative of the worth of those whom they denounced. As a matter of fact both Jeremiah and his successor Ezekiel recognized that the future of Israel lay in the hands of

the better classes in the community. Jeremiah likens the exiles and the remnant that was left in Judah to good and bad figs, respectively (chap. 24). Yet those left in Judah comprised only the poorest and weakest of the population; all the efficient and influential people had been carried away by Babylon (II Kings 24:14). And it is the exiles who for Jeremiah and Ezekiel are the bearers of the hope of Israel. The future is theirs. This shows that these prophets were not mere wild-eyed idealists and dreamers. They were practical men who reckoned with the hard facts of experience. It was as true then as now that the men who carry a country or a people to influence and power are not those who have made a failure in the struggle for existence and have had to be carried along by the stronger elements in the community. The backbone of any social or political order is the great company of men and women who make some sort of success in life and have energy left, after caring for themselves and their dependents, to devote to the interests of the community as a whole. Without such people no society can permanently maintain itself. This the prophets knew and sought, therefore, to influence these makers of the state to accept and be governed by high moral and spiritual ideals. Jeremiah advises yielding to the Babylonians in order to save his people from destruction and his city from devastation, having his eye upon the future of his country and seeking to conserve its best elements for the building of that future (Jer., chap. 27). Such advice naturally brings him under suspicion and at the first opportunity he is cast into prison on charges of disloyalty (Jer., chap. 38). He held up the Rechabites in their simple and loyal obedi-

ence to the wish of their founder as an example to his countrymen (35:1–11), and in all probability commended their simple nomadic way of living in contrast to the more complex, luxuriant, and debased life of the civilization of his day. His devotion to his people was genuine and unselfish in the highest degree, as attested by his heartbroken grief over their waywardness and sin (9:1; 14:17–21) and by his voluntary choice of residence in Jerusalem, when the opportunity to leave his land and become a petted protégé of the Babylonian Court was offered to him (Jer., chap. 40).

60. *Ethical miscellany.*—To complete this socio-ethical sketch of the seventh century in Judah, we must gather up a few outlying social facts. The story of Abraham pleading with Yahweh for the deliverance of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:23–33) demonstrates the acceptance of a view of righteousness as having vicarious efficiency. For the sake of a few righteous men an entire city may be spared destruction. The feeling lying at the heart of this view is that it is not fair to destroy the righteous man on account of the sins of the wicked. It is better to let the wicked go unpunished. This is a step toward the recognition of individual worth and individual responsibility before God and man (cf. Jer. 5:1, 2). Later interpretations of the law emphasize the humanitarian character of the Sabbath as a day of rest for man and beast, slave and free (Exod. 20:9–11), and prohibit the taking of interest upon loans to members of the Hebrew community (Exod. 22:25). This is evidence of a relatively simple economic life and of a feeling of obligation toward fellow-Hebrews as distinguished from foreigners. Zephaniah looks forward to

a time when the ideal Israel shall come into being and gives us a picture of a stricken and trembling people who have learned obedience by the things they have suffered:

> In that day thou wilt not be shamed by any of thy deeds
> wherein thou hast rebelled against me;
> For then I shall remove from the midst of thee thy
> proudly exulting ones,
> And thou wilt no more be haughty in my holy mountains;
> But I shall leave in the midst of thee a people humble and
> poor,
> And the remnant of Israel will seek refuge in the name
> of Yahweh.
> They will do no wickedness, nor will they speak lies,
> Nor will there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue,
> For they will feed and lie down with none to disturb
> them [Zeph. 3:11–13].

61. *Personal standards.*—In the foregoing social practices and ideals, there has, of course, appeared much that reveals the personal standards and attainments of the times in the sphere of morals, for the social and the personal necessarily are closely related and react and interact one upon the other. But some actions and ideals more particularly personal remain to be noted. It would seem from the statements of Jeremiah (5:7 f.; 9:2; 29:23) that sexual crime was common in the land, extending even to the professional representatives of religion. That there was much reason for Jeremiah to denounce this abuse seems clear from the fact that in Josiah's reform movement, one of the outstanding evils to be laid low was the public practice of Sodomy. Men and women were officially set apart for the practice of harlotry, their chambers having been given room in the very temple of Yahweh itself (II Kings 23:7). This

practice, probably originating among the Canaanites and thence coming into Israel, had been in vogue in Judah from an early day, one editor at least putting it back as far as the reign of Rehoboam (I Kings 14:24; cf. 15:12; 22:46). In the light of such practices it is altogether likely that when the prophets talked about adultery and the like they are to be understood as meaning exactly what they said. To be sure, at times they did use such terms figuratively of Israel's apostasy from Yahweh, but that figurative use is itself a testimony to the widespread practice of the thing itself. They knew the meaning of the figure only too well.

62. *Lying* was another widespread evil (Jer. 9:2–6). Particularly significant here is the fact that under some circumstances a lie was deemed excusable, if not commendable. This was, of course, the persistence of an old point of view (see Gen. 12:10–20).[1] But at a critical juncture, Jeremiah did not hesitate to adopt the suggestion to tell a lie, or at least a half-truth, in order that evil consequences might be avoided. When summoned to a private interview by Zedekiah and bidden by the king to report to the princes that the purpose and content of the interview were something other than what they were, Jeremiah fell in with the suggestion and followed the king's behest (Jer. 38:14–27). Jeremiah's motive in so doing was scarcely fear; he had defied the public desire too often to be afraid for his life now. Yet he doubtless reckoned himself worth more to his country

[1] Wellhausen, followed by many scholars, would make this passage one of the secondary or later elements in J; but it is better to follow Gunkel in regarding it as very ancient material coming from another strand of J: see Skinner (*ICC*), *in loc.*

alive than dead. Further, he knew that if he reported the conversation as it was, the king himself would probably be deposed or slain. That would mean the dominance of the politicians of the court and the removal of the last vestige of hope for the adoption of Jeremiah's policy wherein lay the only chance of escape for his country. What should Jeremiah have done? Truth for truth's sake was not a working principle in Jeremiah's day.

63. *Jeremiah* was after all a very natural human being. He was susceptible to all kinds of emotion and capable of all that characterizes a man. He craved the approval of his fellows; he wept over their sins; he longed for the comforts and joys of a home of his own, though he felt compelled by the exigencies of the times to forego all such satisfactions (Jer. 16:1 f.); he developed a righteous anger against his foes. Indeed the vengeful character of his desires regarding them is shocking to our paler emotions (Jer. 11:19 ff.; 12:3; 15:10 ff.; 17:18; 18:18 ff.; 20:12).[1] At times he shrank from the burden of living in such a tragic period and cursed the day of his birth (Jer. 20:14 ff.). This is anything but a "Christian" point of view. But it shows us the depths of gloom to which Jeremiah's spirits could upon occasion descend. It would be unfair and unscientific to appraise Jeremiah's estimate of the

[1] Such passages as these are denied to Jeremiah by some interpreters, but the fact that they express a desire for revenge is no sufficient warrant for so deciding. Jeremiah is not to be judged by Christian standards, nor may we decide as to what he was morally and spiritually by any preconceived estimates. Jeremiah was a strong, virile patriot and his anger was raised to white heat by the evil machinations of his foes, not only against himself but also against the public good.

value of life upon an utterance like this that does but reflect a passing mood. It is to the everlasting credit of Jeremiah that he was able to rise above this level and live a normal and inspiring life at a period when the situation of his country that he so dearly loved was desperate enough to warrant pessimism of sombrest hue.

Jeremiah seems to have regarded Josiah, at least relatively, as the ideal type of king. In rebuking Jehoiakim for his love of display and his failure to pay his workmen who erected his fine buildings, he bids him consider Josiah:

> Shalt thou reign because thou strivest to excel in cedar?
> Did not thy father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness?
> Then it was well with him.
> He judged the cause of the poor and needy;
> Then it was well.
> Is not this to know me? says Yahweh [Jer. 22:15, 16].

64. *Everyday morals.*—That the common people of this century were not wholly bad, notwithstanding the charges brought against them by the prophets, is shown by the record of the honesty and integrity of the workmen engaged in the repairing of the temple in 621 B.C. They were intrusted with large sums of money contributed by the worshipers for the purchase of materials and the payment of wages. "Howbeit, there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand; for they dealt faithfully" (II Kings 22:7).

65. *Utilitarian morals.*—The morals of this prophetic group are through and through utilitarian, showing no appreciable change from the prophetic standpoint of

the eighth century (see chap. 4). The constant stress of the prophets is upon the necessity of right conduct as the prerequisite of success and prosperity. Misfortune and disaster are interpreted as convincing evidence of sin. Yahweh punishes wickedness and rewards goodness and piety. Jeremiah says of his contemporaries:

> Neither say they in their hearts:
> Let us now fear Yahweh our God,
> That gives the former rain and the latter rain in due season;
> That keeps for us the appointed weeks of the harvest.
> Your iniquities have turned away these things,
> And your sins have withholden good from you [Jer. 5:24, 25].

The motive urged to re-enforce the appeal to righteousness is that this is the royal road to the divine favor and to the well-being that flows therefrom (Exod. 15:26; 20:12*b*; Zeph. 1:17 f.). Zephaniah recognizes the fact that the practical man of his day was a bit skeptical about the direct relation between his economic and political welfare on the one hand and the divine will on the other; and he threatens such men with dire punishment:

> I will punish those who are at ease, thickened upon their lees;
> Those who say in their hearts, "Yahweh does neither good nor bad";
> And their substance will become a ruin, and their houses a desolation [Zeph. 1:12 f.].

The same point of view is present at the end of the century when the Jews who fled to Egypt worshiped the "Queen of heaven" in defiance of the prophet's protest. Their argument is that they are but doing what their

fathers did; and that so long as the "Queen of heaven" was worshiped things went well with them, but that when they ceased worshiping her everything went wrong (Jer. 44:15–19). Therefore, they intend to resume and persist in her worship. Thus prophets and populace alike agree that the aim of worship is to secure results in concrete physical well-being; they differ only as to the means whereby it may be attained. The people argue that Yahweh ought to be content with the forms of worship inherited from the fathers and the ethical practices and principles of the past, and finally forsake Yahweh and turn to other gods when the desired prosperity is not forthcoming from him. The prophets explain the lack of prosperity as due to a failure to comply with the demands of Yahweh, which are insistent upon the exercise of justice and mercy. But neither prophets nor people have yet any clear conception of the value of religion and morals apart from the material blessings they are counted upon to bring to the pious.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEUTERONOMIC SCHOOL

66. *Deuteronomy.*—In this chapter we shall take up the ethical principles and motives of the so-called Deuteronomic School. This term is applied to the group of writers that produced the Book of Deuteronomy and edited the traditions and prophecies extant in their day from the point of view of the Deuteronomic philosophy of life. Their work will be found in the Book of Deuteronomy, of course, and in editorial elements now incorporated not only in the Hexateuch as a whole, and in the Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings, but also in the pre-exilic prophetic writings. The work of this school was done, for the most part, in the early years of the Exile, while Deuteronomy itself came into existence gradually, beginning its development some time between Hezekiah and Josiah and coming to completion during the first half of the Exile.[1] The Deuteronomic Code (Deut., chaps. 12–26 and 28) represents the ideals crystallized into statutes, under which the Jews lived for a century and a half or more of the most troubled period of their history. Much of its legislation was necessarily in abeyance during their absence from Palestine and until the Temple was re-erected in 516 B.C. But the Code was not the less recognized as furnishing the ideal standard of practice even though

[1] For a careful study of the origin of the Book of Deuteronomy, see Sir George Adam Smith, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Cambridge Bible, 1918).

for the time being it could not be wholly realized. These standards, being incorporated in a code of laws, are not representative of the most advanced thought of their times, but rather of the average man's morality. As was pointed out in connection with the study of the ethics of the Covenant Code (see pp. 50 f.), the ethics of a code of laws or of individual statutes never comes from the front line of moral progress. Legalized ethics is always the ethics of the average man—especially when the laws in which it is enshrined have to obtain the approval of the group as a whole, as was the case with the Deuteronomic Code. Of course, the first eleven chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy are not statutory in character, but homiletic; and therefore were not subject to the same limitations in aspiration as the legal part of the book. But the tone of these chapters is not essentially different from that of the Code itself. The same ideals pervade the book, in general, from beginning to end.[1]

In summarizing the ethical principles and practices of Deuteronomy, we shall begin with the moral aspects of the conception of God, pass on to the attitude of Israel toward people of other nations, consider next the laws dealing with the rights of women and family obligations, and follow these with those regarding slavery, treatment of the poor, and the administration of justice. The chapter will close with a consideration of the ethical motive stressed by the Deuteronomists and of their claim to Mosaic origin for this body of law.

67. *The conception of God.*—For the ethical element in the conception of God, we might cite the whole book

[1] For an excellent statement on this matter, see Sir George Adam Smith's *Deuteronomy* (Cambridge Bible, 1918), especially pp. xci–xciv.

of Deuteronomy, since the scheme of the book involves assigning all of its contents to direct and personal divine revelation. But for convenience of treatment we shall confine our study of the morals of Yahweh to the materials relating directly to Yahweh's own attitudes and activities as reflected in the records. The constant presupposition of Deuteronomy is that Yahweh has chosen Israel as his own people, and that he naturally does all in his power to favor Israel and takes every opportunity to injure Israel's foes. He gave the Hebrews the land of Canaan and enabled them to take it away forcibly from its previous inhabitants (Deut. 1:20; 7:6; 26:18, 19). It is his will to set Israel high above all other peoples (28:1). He does this sort of thing not because of any especial merit on the part of the Hebrews, but on account of the sins of the Canaanites (9:4–6).

This deprecating of any special love for Israel on Yahweh's part in giving Canaan to them is probably motivated by a desire to take away from the Hebrew mind any occasion for undue self-esteem and to bring vividly to consciousness the fact that Yahweh abhors unrighteousness, even to the point of exterminating an unrighteous nation. Let Israel itself take heed! In pursuit of this same desire to keep Israel from being too self-satisfied, the Deuteronomists inform Israel that Yahweh's love for his people is based not upon a special worthiness on their part, but upon his own will so to do. "Yahweh did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people—for ye were the fewest of all peoples—but because Yahweh loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore with your fathers, etc." (Deut. 7:7, 8). Yahweh loved

you, because he loved you! It is an inexplicable act of divine grace. Because of that unreasoned love, Yahweh will fight Israel's battles (Deut. 1:30); while on the other hand, he hardened Sihon's heart that he might destroy him and his people (2:30) and he bade Israel destroy Heshbon of Moab, man, woman, and child (2:31–36). Similar destruction was sent by him upon Og and the people of Bashan (3:1–7). Intermarriage with the Canaanites is forbidden and their complete extermination decreed (7:2, 3). Perpetual hostility toward Ammon and Moab is enjoined (23:3–6), and even the memory of Amalek is to be blotted out (25:19). Vengeance upon certain foes is evidently a virtue in the eyes of Yahweh. Nevertheless, though the Moabites and Ammonites are to be denied admission to the assembly of Yahweh even to the tenth generation, the children of Edom may enter said assembly in the third generation (23:8). This more kindly attitude toward Edom changed in the course of time to a deadly hatred on the part of Israel in response to wrongs heaped upon her by Edom. Yahweh assures Israel that this Deuteronomic law which he gives her is far and away the best law in the world, that no other nation has anything approaching it in righteousness (4:8), even as no other nation has a God so nigh unto them as Yahweh is to his people.

68. *Israel's duty.*—These favors on the part of Yahweh of course involve certain obligations on the part of Israel. She is forbidden the worship of any other God, on pain of the loss of Yahweh's blessing (13:13–18). Any promoter of such worship must be put to death (13:10). Yahweh's worship must be kept free from contamination by sexual indulgence in any form (23:18).

Vows made to Yahweh must be paid; it is no sin not to vow, but it is unpardonable not to fulfil a vow once made (23:22, 23). The penalty for displeasing Yahweh might be very severe. Because Israel was afraid to trust Yahweh and enter boldly upon the conquest of Palestine when the spies brought back their report, Yahweh was wroth and swore a mighty oath in accordance with which he kept Israel out of Canaan for a whole generation (1:34 ff.). Not all the pleading of Israel availed anything to change the divine will (1:41–45). Indeed Moses himself fell under the divine wrath on account of the sins of the people (1:37) and was not permitted to enter the promised land (3:26, 27). This is vicarious punishment that accomplished nothing in the way of atonement for the actual sinners or anybody else. But while Moses was involved in the punishment of Israel, he was nevertheless able to dissuade Yahweh from his purpose to destroy Israel completely by appealing to Yahweh's pride (9:18 f., 25 ff.; 10:10). In like manner he succeeded in saving Aaron (9:20 f.). Another interpretation of the forty years in the desert is given in 8:2. There it is said that Yahweh afflicted Israel thus in order that he might thereby test them and so find out whether or not they would keep his commandments. This was a protracted examination of a very human kind.

69. *Family solidarity.*—To complete the Deuteronomic conception of the ethics of Yahweh, we cite one more point of view. In the explanatory material added to the second command of the Decalogue, Yahweh is described as "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth genera-

tion of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments" (Exod. 20:5, 6; Deut. 5:9, 10; cf. Exod. 34:7). Here is the old family solidarity clearly recognized. The parent involves his children and children's children in disaster by his sin, which Yahweh will and must punish. But the mercy of Yahweh extends even further than his wrath. "The intention of the passage is thus to teach that God's mercy transcends in operation his wrath; in his providence the beneficent consequences of a life of goodness extend indefinitely further than the retribution which is the penalty of persistence in sin."[1] This thought is brought out even more clearly in 7:9 f., where it is supplemented by the statement that Yahweh visits the transgression of the sinner upon his own person. "Know therefore that Yahweh thy God—he is God, the faithful God, who keeps covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations, and repays them that hate him to their face, to destroy them—he will not be slack to him that hates him, he will repay him to his face." In keeping with this emphasis upon the idea that the sinner will suffer at God's hand for his sin, is the express precept in the Deuteronomic Code itself to the same effect: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (24:16). This emphasis upon individual responsi-

[1] Driver, *Exodus*, on Exod. 20:6. This intention is brought out more clearly by the translation of the Jewish Publication Society (1917) which runs: "Showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love me, etc." But this rendering calls for a slight change of text.

bility as over against family and group solidarity is in such marked contrast to the spirit of the rest of the Deuteronomic Code that it is most easily accounted for as a later element in the Code inspired by the teaching of Ezekiel (see pp. 176 ff.).[1]

70. *Attitude toward foreigners.*—Turning from the consideration of the moral element in the idea of God, we take up the ethical principles illustrated in the precepts and statutes controlling man's relations with his fellows. The attitude toward foreigners is in general that with which we have already become familiar. A sharp distinction is made in favor of the Hebrew as over against the non-Hebrew. Foreigners are not granted any benefits from the operation of the law providing for the release from all debts every seventh year (15:2). The carcass of an animal that dies a natural death may not be eaten by a Hebrew, but he may give it to a "sojourner" or sell it to a foreigner (14:21). No foreigner may be chosen as King of Israel (17:15). No interest may be charged upon loans to fellow Hebrews, but upon loans to foreigners there is no restriction; the Hebrew may charge them "all the traffic will bear."

In war against foreign nations, Israel's treatment of the foe is to be determined by the geographical location of the enemy. If the foe is a people very near at hand, Israel must show no mercy but inflict total destruction (20:16 ff.). If the hostile people are farther removed from Hebrew territory, then the treatment accorded them is determined by their own attitude. If they wish to submit to Israel, terms of peace may be drawn up; but

[1] But cf. Sir George Adam Smith on Deut. 24:16 (Cambridge Bible, 1918).

if they are irreconcilable and implacable, they must be smitten by the sword and all their males slain (20:11 ff). One regulation regarding war is in striking contrast to the course of proceedings followed by our friends, the enemy, in the late world-war. Fruit trees are not to be destroyed; other kinds of trees may be made use of for military purposes (20:19).

71. *The laws regarding women* show practically no advance over those of the Covenant Code (see p. 58). However, in the Deuteronomic edition of the Decalogue, the revised form of the tenth commandment (5:18) puts woman in the first place among the things that may not be coveted, whereas in Exodus 20:17 she had to yield that position of pre-eminence to the house. Most of the regulations regarding women deal with her from the point of view of sex. The low status of family life is seen in the fact that the women of a beaten and destroyed nation are taken over and added to the harems of the conquering Hebrews (21:11 ff.). If the conqueror be not pleased with his slave wife, he is required to give her her freedom; he may not sell her, nor treat her as a slave after he has taken her to wife, because he has "humbled her." This shows some appreciation of the rights and dignity of human personality. In another type of case, however, there is a strange bluntness of feeling revealed. If a man falsely accuses his young wife of not having guarded her virginity prior to her marriage, the evidence shall be exhibited to the public gaze, and the accuser shall not only be whipped and forced to pay his father-in-law a hundred shekels, but he is also compelled to live with the accused wife as long as she lives. All the conditions for a life-long tragedy

are thus provided. If the charges of the husband are found to be true, the guilty woman is stoned to death by the men of her city (22:13–21). If a man be caught in adultery with the wife of another man, both offenders are put to death (22:22). If the woman be a betrothed virgin and the offense be committed in a city, both man and woman must die; but if in the open country, the woman goes free. The supposition is that the woman in the country cried out for help, but was not heard; whereas in the city she could have made herself heard if she had wanted to do so (22:23–27). If the woman be an unbetrothed virgin, no harm is done that the man cannot make good—he merely pays fifty shekels of silver as dowry to the girl's father and she becomes his wife for life (22:28). Sexual intercourse with a wife of one's father is prohibited in 22:30 and 27:20. This prohibition is absolute and not limited to the father's lifetime. It is directed against a practice that was quite common in early Israel in accordance with which a son inherited his father's wives along with the rest of his father's property. This is a sign of a growing consciousness of the rights of personality as applied to woman and it was a step toward greater stability in family relations. The offspring of certain prohibited unions are denied admission to the congregation of Yahweh (23:2), even to the tenth generation.[1] A divorced wife who is married to another husband may not be remarried to the first husband after the second one has died or has likewise divorced her (24:1–3). The motive of this regulation is not wholly clear, but

[1] The Hebrew word describing such children is *mamzer*. It occurs again only in Zech. 9:6. Its meaning is wholly uncertain.

it would certainly act as a deterrent upon easy divorce and quick remarriage and would make for greater permanency of the marriage relation. This was a mild check upon the husband's power, for he seems to have had the initiative in matters of divorce and to have needed only to give the wife a written statement certifying his release of her and she was left to the mercies of an unsympathetic world. There is no provision in the Deuteronomic law nor in any other Hebrew code for the divorce of a husband by his wife. Such cases did not arise. A woman without a husband was without visible means of support and few women would willingly subject themselves to all that that involved. The purity and integrity of the family tie is guarded by prohibitions against sexual intercourse with a sister or half-sister or one's mother-in-law (27:22 f.). A newly married husband is exempt for one year after his marriage from all military service and public responsibility that he may be free to "cheer his wife" (24:5). An indelicate woman is drastically punished (25:11 f.). No better proof that a woman is regarded primarily as means rather than as an end in herself can be asked than that which is furnished by the law of Levirate marriage (25:5–10). If a man dies without a son his brother must marry his widow and the first son of this marriage must be regarded as the dead brother's child. The widow has no voice in the matter; that she will accept the situation is taken for granted. Public opinion blackens the name of a brother who will not do this favor to the departed brother (cf. Gen., chap. 38). In the early days, this custom had its origin in ancestor-worship, the purpose of such a marriage being to provide the dead husband with an

heir whose obligation it was to perform the rites due to his supposititious deceased parent. Deuteronomy, of course, would not countenance such usage; but in the course of the generations this old practice doubtless changed somewhat in significance and came to be associated more consciously with the right of inheritance to a deceased brother's estate.[1] The duty of a child to honor father and mother is reaffirmed by Deuteronomy and a curse pronounced upon the one who refuses so to do (5:16; 27:16).

It is quite evident that woman as such had few rights. She was the property of father, brother, or husband and was safeguarded by such laws as would conserve her value as property. But the law gives her no recognition as a citizen and little as an independent personality. She comes to expression and recognition in father, brother, husband, or son. She is a liability economically or a commercial asset, as the case may be, according as she is a marketable commodity as a potential bride, or a capable worker as a wife and mother, or worn-out and useless physically, merely a mouth to be fed and a body to be housed and clothed. She is always at the mercy of other people and prospers or otherwise according as they are kind and generous or the reverse. The law affords her little protection against those who have her in their power. Her only armor is her own character and the force of public opinion which acts slowly and not always effectively. It must be remembered, however, that the law as such is always outrun in progress by the best public sentiment and we shall make no mistake if we assume that the women of pre-exilic Israel led fairly

[1] See I. Benzinger, art. "Marriage," *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Vol. III.

happy lives and succeeded in obtaining by their own merits much more than the law guaranteed to them.

72. *Parents and children.*—We may add here, in order to close up the consideration of matters directly pertaining to the family, two laws regarding children. The first of these (21:15 ff.) provides for the security of the rights of first-born sons; it insists upon such a son's right to the lion's share of the inheritance even though he be the child of a wife that is relegated to a second place or lower in her husband's affections. No other child may be put in the place of the first-born. The element of justice in this, of course, granting the legitimacy of a discrimination in favor of the first-born, as universally recognized in that period, is that the first-born son is shielded against suffering the consequences of his mother's misfortune. The second law pertaining to children provides that when a father and mother unite in an appeal to the elders against a gluttonous, drunken, stubborn, or rebellious son, he shall be stoned to death by the men of the city (21:18–21). Such an appeal would, of course, be forthcoming only in very aggravated cases, in view of its serious consequences. But such a law shows on the one hand the extent to which parental authority went, and on the other the limit placed upon its exercise by public opinion. If death must be inflicted, it is only in case the community indorses the penalty to the extent of actually participating in its infliction.

73. *Slavery.*—The laws as to slaves are few and reflect little advance upon those of the Covenant Code (see pp. 56 ff.). The seventh year manumission for Hebrew slaves is reaffirmed (15:12 ff.) and is supplemented by

regulations providing that the owner shall furnish the departing slave with a supply of goods sufficient to sustain him a reasonable time until he gets upon his economic feet. The same privilege of release after six years of service is now extended to the woman slave, as it was not in the Covenant Code. There is no specification of conditions as to husband or children in the case of the woman; she is simply put upon the same basis as the man. Provision is made for perpetual slavery just as in the Covenant Code; 15:16 f. (cf. pp. 56 f.). Slaves are included among those who participate in the jubilation attending the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles (16:11–14). The stealing of Hebrews and selling them into slavery is made a capital crime (24:7), just as in the Covenant Code (see p. 58). A fugitive slave law is in the Code which is in contrast to the Fugitive Slave Law of the United States before the Civil War in that it distinctly provides that in case a slave flees from his master and takes refuge in Israel he must not be delivered over to his former owner (23:15, 16). It is quite clear from the phraseology of this verse that the slave here protected is one, either Hebrew or foreigner, who has been in slavery among some foreign people and has sought refuge and freedom in Israel. Of course, pre-exilic Israel would feel no obligation to a foreign nation or individual in such a case to accommodate them by returning the runaway; but it is notable that the language of the law provides for the welfare of the runaway by insisting that he shall not be oppressed (23:16). We have already seen that the contemporaries of Jeremiah in Jerusalem did not live up to the requirements of the manumission of slaves

in the seventh year (p. 114); so that in this particular case the law was ahead of the public sentiment of the day. However, the days following the reign of Josiah were shadowed by reaction in religion and morals and this disregard of the slave law was part of a general moral relaxation.

74. *The poor and weak.*—It is but a short step between slavery and poverty; hence we may naturally consider next the laws designed to protect the poor and weak. This sort of legislation is one of the outstanding features of the Deuteronomic Code. It greatly exceeds in quantity the similar legislation in the Covenant Code (pp. 60 f.); and it shows a solicitude and sympathy for the needy that is of the same type as that of the Covenant Code, but it is worked out in more detail and is everywhere present. Those who are specifically included within the scope of this legislation are the stranger, the poor, the Levite, the fatherless, and the widow. This humanitarian note first appears in the Deuteronomic version of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue (5:14 f.). Whereas, in Exodus 20, the reason for the observance of the Sabbath lies in the fact that Yahweh rested upon the seventh day from all his creative labors, so that man should order his scheme of work likewise, here it is found in the body's necessity for rest and particularly in the need of rest upon the part of manservant and maidservant. The master's sensitiveness to this need is quickened by a reference to the slave life of Israel in Egypt in the early days. In similar fashion, Israel is urged to "love" the "stranger,"[1] whom Yahweh loves

[1] The term "stranger" is used in a technical sense to designate non-Israelites who have come under the protection of Israel, and are dependent upon her for their existence.

and provides with food and raiment, remembering that they were "strangers" in Egypt (10:17–19). Special attention is called to the need of the Levite who has no property and is dependent upon the generosity of the worshipers (12:12, 19; 14:27). He shares in the triennial tithe with the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (14:29; 26:12, 13).

75. *Release of debts.*—One of the laws most characteristic of the Deuteronomic spirit is that which pertains to the remission of debts every seventh year (15:1–11). The year of release is to be definitely fixed and to be the same all over the land. Well-to-do Hebrews are bidden to loan freely to their needy brethren and to charge no interest upon such loans. Foreigners may be required to pay interest, but not Hebrews (see also 23:20). If the needy Hebrew has been unable to repay the loan by the time the seventh year comes around, the creditor must wipe the slate clean that the debtor may have a new start unhampered by clinging debts. If the year of release is close at hand, the good Hebrew is charged not to allow that fact to affect his willingness to lend to his brother in need. This is making heavy demands again upon human nature. The lawmaker realizes this and hastens to say, first, that there will be no poor in Israel, if the people will but obey the laws of Yahweh. This, however, he recognizes as a state of society that does not yet exist and so, coming down to hard facts, he declares that "the poor will never cease out of the land" and encourages Israel to take up this apparently unprofitable business of making loans that will probably not be repaid by assuring her that this is the key to the divine favor. Religion is here brought in to re-enforce

ethics in a very direct way. This same concern for the poor is seen in the prohibition against taking the poor man's mill or upper millstone as a pledge for the repayment of a loan; it is his "life" (24:6). Without it, the daily food for the family table could not be prepared. Nor may a widow's garment be taken in pledge (24:17); and the law of the Covenant Code requiring the return of the poor man's pledged garment every night that he may be warm while he sleeps is reaffirmed. A bit of delicate consideration for the poor family's feelings is evinced in the regulation that the creditor shall not follow the debtor into his home to obtain the pledge, but shall wait outside while the pledge is found and brought out to him (24:10–13). A similar appreciation of the necessities and feelings of the poor is manifested in the law requiring masters to pay their servant's wages at the close of each day's service (24:14 f.); in this matter Hebrew and "stranger" must be treated alike. Nor may a poor man or woman be unjustly treated in court; the "stranger," fatherless, and widow are to receive their full rights before the law and not to be denied them in favor of the more powerful and rich (24:17 f.; 27:19). A curse is pronounced upon him who wilfully misleads the blind (27:18). The farmer is instructed not to return to pick up a forgotten sheaf of grain, but to leave it for the "stranger," the fatherless, and the widow (24:19). In the interest of the welfare of the same needy group, the olive tree must not be too thoroughly beaten, nor the vineyard carefully gleaned (24:20, 21).

76. *Exercise of justice.*—Closely related to this care for the poor is the emphasis laid upon the duty of exercising justice. Justice is always primarily the

protector of the weak from oppression and robbery at the hands of the strong. This appears in the first reference to justice in Deuteronomy (1:16, 17); the Hebrew judges should be just, having no respect of persons, but treating all classes impartially and fearing nobody, remembering always that in the last analysis the judgment is God's. Yahweh himself is the just judge par excellence; "he regards not persons, takes no reward [i.e., a bribe], and executes justice" (10:17 f.). This absolute freedom from favoritism on the part of the judges is insisted upon (16:18–20). If any case is too difficult for the regular judges, it should be referred to the priests, who as representatives of Yahweh, the supreme judge, constitute a court of last resort; they obtain the final decision directly from Yahweh by consultation of the oracle (17:8–13). The general principle in accordance with which justice is to be exercised is that of the *lex talionis*, "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (19:21). In an age when a general standardization of weights and measures was unknown, the temptation to cheat was ever present; consequently all that juggle with their weights and measures are declared to be an abomination unto Yahweh (25:13–16). In a case involving capital punishment, great care is taken to insure the accused against false testimony; only if two or more witnesses testify to his guilt may he be put to death; and that the witnesses may not take their responsibility lightly, it is provided that the witnesses themselves shall cast the first stones (17:2–7; cf. 13:9, 10). This is in accord with the ninth command of the Decalogue (5:20; Exod. 20:16). Each city is made responsible for the pres-

ervation of law and order in the immediately contiguous territory to a certain extent. If a man be found slain in the open country, expiation of the crime through the killing of a heifer that has not been broken in to work must be made by the elders of that city which was nearest to the spot where the murdered man lay (21:1–9). There is nothing essentially new in this law, nor is there any strictly moral attitude reflected, except in the provision that the nearest town is responsible. It is an old ceremony, probably connected with the fear of wandering spirits, and the principle of community responsibility for such things was of widespread acceptance.[1] Murder is, of course, still prohibited (5:17), and two special types are especially mentioned, viz., secret murder (27:24) and the hiring of assassins (27:25). A distinction is recognized between accidental homicide or killing in self-defense, and deliberate murder, in that cities of refuge are provided to which the slayer may flee and where he may find refuge from the blood-avenger, in case he is not a deliberate murderer. This is a special endeavor to mitigate the law of blood-revenge and shows how implacable that law was, for the innocent slayer is safe only so long as he stays within his asylum, thus being kept indefinitely from his home and business (4:41–43; 19:3–13). If a man's house lacks a parapet around the roof and someone falls from it and is injured or slain, the owner of the house is held responsible and comes under the operation of the laws for manslaughter, personal injury, etc.; hence it is prescribed that every

[1] Sir George Adam Smith, *Deuteronomy*, *ad loc.*, calls attention to parallel cases in the code of Hammurabi (§§ 23, 24); Kitab-el-Aghani IX, 178, ll.25 ff.; Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, I, 176; and in modern Palestine.

house shall have a balustrade around the roof (22:8). The farmer is protected against the depredations of robbers by a law that forbids the taking of a basket or sack into a neighbor's vineyard in order to carry away the fruit, or taking a sickle into his grain-field to reap the grain for one's self (23:24, 25). Allowance is made for the weakness of human nature in that the visitor is allowed to pluck and eat all that he wishes. What a boon this would be to the Negro in his white neighbor's melon-patch! The removing of landmarks against which the prophets had protested is prohibited in 27:17; this was, of course, a method of increasing one's own holdings of land at the expense of one's neighbors. A proper sense of justice is reflected in the decision ascribed to Moses that the Reubenites and Gadites who had been helped by the rest of Israel to obtain their settlements east of the Jordan should cross over and aid their brethren in securing the west of the Jordan for themselves (3:18 ff.).

77. *Influence of prophets.*—The increased interest in the poor and weak and the added emphasis upon Yahweh's demand for justice as compared with the corresponding material in the Covenant Code (pp. 53–61), is evidence of the influence of the preaching of the great prophets upon the public mind. Deuteronomy is a product of the prophetic age and represents a composite of prophetic and priestly materials. In a sense it is a compromise between the two schools of thought. It is an attempt to put the prophetic ideals into legal form and to bring the whole force of the law to their enforcement. It was a step fraught with great danger, since it opened the way for the substitution of the legalistic

spirit for the free spirit of prophecy. To put this in another way, it was the beginning of the movement which ended by substituting the authority of the past for the inspiration of the present. It accepted a "thus said Yahweh" in place of a "thus saith Yahweh." It tended to cause the conscience of the present and its confidence in the validity of its own judgments to become dulled, in that religious and moral decisions must always be determined by the law once delivered in days gone by to the great men who were no longer living and serving.

Deuteronomy itself marks progress. It definitely and explicitly prohibits human sacrifice, divination, sorcery, soothsaying, enchantments and charms, wizards, and necromancers (18:10 ff.). Enlightenment and intelligence are taking the place of ignorance and superstition. The high ideals of the Covenant Code as to restoring stray animals to their owners and helping unfortunate neighbors to raise a fallen animal are here reaffirmed (22:1–4). Animals even are not wholly disregarded for the master must unmuzzle the ox that tramples upon his grain on the threshing-floor (25:4; cf. 5:14); and while the eggs or young of a bird may be taken from the nest, the dam must be released (22:6, 7). The motive for this latter law, which is given nowhere else, is not clear; whether impelled by economic considerations or by sympathy, or by superstition is open to question. Mankind is warned against undue self-pride and urged to give credit for his achievements to Yahweh (8:11 ff.). And one aphorism regarding the philosophy of living was thought worthy at a later age, when given a slightly different shade of meaning, to be placed upon

the lips of Jesus when lured by Satan in the wilderness, "man does not live upon bread alone; but upon everything that proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh does man live" (8:3). The thought here is not in a contrast between *bread* and Yahweh's word, but rather in the truth that all of man's subsistence and existence is dependent upon the good will of Yahweh, to whom, therefore, he should be profoundly grateful. While a proper humility before Yahweh is thus inculcated, it must not be forgotten that the individual man as man is possessor of a certain personal worth and dignity that must not be imperiled. Even in the infliction of corporal punishment, the rights of personality must be respected; and so no man may be given more than forty stripes, for in such a case "thy brother would be dishonored before thy eyes" (25:1–3).

78. *The motive for goodness.*—One of the outstanding characteristics of the Deuteronomic ethics is the constant and ever-recurring obtrusion of the motive for goodness. This is the dominant note of the whole book and of the Code itself. The motive is in principle always the same. Whether for nation or for individual, the inducement to keep the law is never lacking. It is urged upon the Israelite at every turn and is so inseparable from the Deuteronomic thought as to constitute an almost infallible test of Deuteronomic editorial activity wherever it appears. It is phrased in various ways: "Hearken etc. that ye may live" (4:1); "that it may go well with thee and with thy children after thee, that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the land" (4:40; 5:16, 29; 6:2, 18; 7:12–16; 8:1; 11:8, 9; 11:20 f.; 12:25, 28; 16:20; 17:20; 22:7); "Yahweh commanded us to fear

Yahweh for our good always that he might preserve us alive etc." (6:24); "it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all this commandment" (6:25; 24:13). The favor of Yahweh in the bestowal of concrete and material blessings is the reward for virtue and the loss of these blessings is the penalty for disobedience and vice. "It shall come to pass that if you hearken attentively to my commandments . . . . then I will give the rain of your land in its season, the early and the later rain; and thou shalt gather thy corn and thy new wine and thy oil; and I will give herbage in thy field for thy cattle, and thou shalt eat and be satisfied." (11:13–15). But on the contrary, if Israel is disobedient, rebellious, and disloyal, then "the anger of Yahweh will burn against you and he will restrain the heavens and there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its increase, and you will perish quickly from upon the goodly land which Yahweh is going to give you" (11:17; cf. 4:25 ff.; 11:22 ff., 26 ff.; 15:18). It is noteworthy that in the great enumeration of blessings and curses at the close of the book (28:1–68), constituting a list of rewards and punishments for virtues and vices respectively, the list of curses is far more extended than the corresponding list of blessings. It is quite apparent that in the thought of the makers of those lists the motive of fear as a deterrent from evil was looked upon as far more effective than the motive of gain as an incentive toward the good.

As we have seen in our study of the morals of the prophetic teachings, this motive of reward for piety and punishment for disobedience is characteristic of all the prophets. It was the only practical motive operative with the great mass of the people in pre-exilic Israel,

even if, indeed, it is not so with the majority of the human race today. Some appreciation of less tangible aspects of life was slowly developing, but no such idealistic sentiments had achieved sufficient standing to have obtained recognition in the law. It is worthy of note that to a very large extent the laws and precepts of the Deuteronomic Code are without definite and specific penalties, but are dependent upon the support of public sentiment and upon the hopes and fears of the people for their enforcement. That is why there is so much of the hortatory and persuasive element in the Deuteronomic Code. The legislators are appealing to the desires and fears of the people themselves to secure conformity to the law and not to any great extent to any official authority with power to enforce its will as expressed in the letter of the law. This subjective element in Deuteronomy, as also in the prophetic sermons, was one of the great educational influences of pre-exilic Israel tending to develop an enlightened and keenly sensitive conscience, at least in the more spiritually minded members of the Hebrew community.

79. *The claim for Mosaic authorship.*—There remains for consideration an aspect of the Deuteronomic legislation that has given much concern to many people. The Book of Deuteronomy and the Code it sets forth make the claim of Mosaic origin; the laws were given by Yahweh himself through Moses to the people of Israel (1:1; 4:1 f., 13 f., 44 f.; 5:1–5; 6:1 f.; 8:1; 10:1–5; 11:32; 27:1, *et passim*). Similar claims are made for the Decalogue in Exodus and the Covenant Code (Exod. 20:1, 22, E; 24:18, E; 32:16, E; 34:1, 27, 28, J; etc.). If there is one thing above all others clearly

established by historical and literary criticism it is that the Book of Deuteronomy and its Code originated centuries later than the days of Moses. What then shall we say to such claims as are made by the authors? Are they deliberate lies made with intent to deceive? Before deciding that question, we should consider the attitude of the ancient world to such matters. We have a close parallel in the Code of Hammurabi. Hammurabi reigned in Babylonia from 2123–2081 B.C. In January, 1902, a code of laws promulgated by this king was found by the French expedition at Susa, the capital of ancient Elam, whither it had been carried by an Elamite conqueror of Babylon. Hammurabi's Code presupposes the existence of an ancient and highly-developed civilization in Babylon. As we have seen (pp. 49 f.), a code is the last stage in the development of a body of law, and presupposes as the materials for its construction earlier statutes and customs.[1] Hammurabi's Code was no exception to this rule. We actually have in our hands now the older Sumerian family laws which were taken over by Hammurabi and incorporated in his Code. Some of these laws are almost verbatim duplicates of laws in Hammurabi's Code and they antedate that Code by centuries.[2] Hammurabi then was but an editor, reviser,

[1] For an excellent statement of this fact, see J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, III (1918), 93 ff.

[2] See A. T. Clay, "A Sumerian Prototype of the Hammurabi Code," *Orientalistische Literatur-Zeitung*, XVII (1914), 1 ff., who says, "It is now quite clear from a tablet in the Yale Babylonian Collection not only that the Code of Hammurabi was preceded in point of time by a Sumerian code or codes, as has hitherto been maintained, but also, as has been naturally inferred, that the Babylonian law-giver actually based his laws upon existing codes." See also A. T. Clay, *Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Babylonian Collections* (1915), p. 45.

codifier of law; he did not originate *ab ovo*, nor did he receive it straight from the heavens. Yet Hammurabi represents himself on his stele as standing before Shamash, the god of justice, and receiving the law from him. To leave no possibility of our misunderstanding the pictured scene, he distinctly says in the Epilogue to his Code: "Hammurabi, the King of righteousness, to whom Shamash has communicated the laws, am I." This statement is not a later bit of praise ascribed to the king by distant admirers; it is under his own authority; it is his own claim. It is not necessary to charge either Hammurabi or the authors of the Deuteronomic legislation with deliberate fraud; to do so would show a lack of the genuinely historical mind. The explanation is to be found partly in the ancient *Weltanschauung*, which was through and through religious. Everything good was credited to the activity of the gods. Hammurabi, therefore, would inevitably attribute to the inspiration of the gods any thought that came to him for the betterment of the existing legislation of his land, in whatever form that inspiration might work itself out. Similarly the Hebrews were wholly honest in claiming a divine origin for their laws. It was their perfectly sincere explanation of the genesis of their law. In this they were of the same mind as the ancient world in general. The Cretans attributed their law to Jupiter, the Spartans derived theirs from Apollo; the Romans claimed that Numa wrote their laws at the dictation of the goddess Egeria; the Etruscans got theirs from the god Tages.[1] Further, in

[1] See de Coulanges, *La cité antique* (13th ed., 1890), p. 221 (cited by Causse, *Les Prophètes d'Israel et les Religions de l'Orient* [1913], p. 71). Strabo (XVI, 2, 38 f.), who was born 63 B.C., notes the fact that ancient legislators presented their laws as of divine origin.

regard to the Deuteronomic Code, it must be remembered that this was a body of law in large measure resting upon the past. Much that is in this Code goes back into relatively ancient times. Consequently it required no stretch of the imagination to call it a Mosaic production. There is no sufficient reason to deny the possibility of the origin of some of the customs incarnated in this Code in a period at least as old as that of Moses; and the makers of the Code were not interested in nor equipped for a task of fine historical discrimination.[1] Finally, the purpose of the Deuteronomists must be reckoned with. They were not concerned in a task of literary or historical criticism. In their day questions of this sort had not arisen anywhere in the world. Rights of authorship were of no particular value, nor were charges of plagiarism reckoned with. There was no conscience upon such matters. These men were concerned in putting through a great reform movement which absorbed their whole energy. To render the path of reform less arduous, they laid hold of the old tradition that Moses obtained laws from Yahweh at Sinai and they gave their law, which was a combination of old and new legislation, all the prestige that attached to the name of Moses. They had the co-operation of a representative of the prophets in carrying out their plan (II Kings 22:14–20). Judged by the standards of their own day, they were wholly within their rights; and no other standards can be properly applied to their acts.

[1] We still speak of *Webster's Dictionary* though much of its contents came into being after Webster's day.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROBLEM OF THE EXILES

80. *The situation of the exiles.*—In 597 B.C. and again in 586, the Babylonian army invaded Palestine, defeated the Jews who had revolted against Babylon's authority, and finally destroyed Jerusalem and carried off the most influential elements of the population into exile in Babylonia. This condition of subjection to Babylon continued till the rise of Persia and the issuance of a decree by Cyrus permitting the exiles to return to the home-land (II Chron. 36:22 f.; Ezra 1:1–4). This catastrophe dealt a fatal blow to the old popular religion which had banked upon Yahweh's loyalty to his people and had derided the prophets and persecuted them for their predictions of dire disaster. These events had vindicated the prophets at least, and had shown that the smug complacency of the people and their political leaders was without solid foundation. They were left without a program and with faith imperiled. Amid these conditions and in the closing days of the Babylonian supremacy, there lived the prophet whose writings are now found in Isaiah, chapters 40–55.[1] What the problems of his day were and how he tried to solve them are clearly shown in his utterances. For the sake of con-

[1] For the considerations that lead to placing these chapters in this period, see S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1914), pp. 230–46; G. B. Gray, *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament* (1913), pp. 184 f.; J. Skinner, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, chaps. xl–lxvi (Cambridge Bible, 1917), pp. xv–xl; J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament* (1922), pp. 200–213.

venience, this prophet is usually distinguished from Isaiah of the eighth century B.C. by being called Deutero-Isaiah.

Our interest here is in the ethical side of the situation in which Deutero-Isaiah and his contemporaries found themselves. But we must introduce our consideration of that by following the prophet's general line of thought. The old prophetic teaching that piety is rewarded by prosperity was in desperate need of rehabilitation. The easy explanation that Yahweh was punishing the sinful Israel through the hands of a pagan nation no longer satisfied Jewish minds. As we have already seen (pp. 105 ff.), it had given rise to serious questions in the latter part of the pre-exilic period. The answer given by Habakkuk was not equal to the solution of the problem as it was now formulating itself. This is the task to which Deutero-Isaiah gave himself. A solution of the problem was essential if his countrymen were to continue to believe in Yahweh.

81. *The goodness of God.*—It is quite evident that many Jews were strongly tempted to forego their faith in Yahweh, as a result of the series of disasters that had befallen them. Were not the gods of the Babylonians the rulers of the universe? Why remain loyal to a powerless deity, who was unable to protect or reward his followers? It is to meet such a state of mind that Deutero-Isaiah gives so much prominence to the power of Yahweh and particularly to his creative energy (see e.g., Isa. 40:12–17, 22–26; 42:5; 43:16). To the same end, he ridicules the idolatry of Babylon, pointing out the futility of idols in masterly manner (see especially Isa. 40:18–20; 44:10–20; and 46:1–7). He also uses the argument from prediction to contrast the greatness

of Yahweh with the nothingness of Babylon's idols (see 41:21–29; 42:9; 43:9, 10, 12; 44:6–8; 48:14). But the people's thought is that if the prophet's statements are true, then Yahweh surely does not love his people, or he has forgotten them (40:27). To this charge the prophet brings a fervent denial, setting up his own firm confidence in the divine goodness in opposition to the doubt of the people:

> But Zion said: "Yahweh has forsaken me,
> And the Lord has forgotten me."
> Can a woman forget her sucking child,
> And not have compassion upon the son of her womb?
> Even if these should forget, I will not forget thee.
> See—I have graven thee on the palms of my hands;
> Thy walls are constantly before me [Isa. 49:14–16].

And again:

> For as a wife forsaken and wounded in spirit, will Yahweh summon thee;
> And a wife wedded in youth—that she should be abandoned! saith thy God.
> For a brief moment I forsook thee,
> But with great tenderness will I gather thee.
> In a little anger, I hid my face from thee for a moment,
> But with unending kindness will I be tender toward thee,
> Says thy vindicator, Yahweh.
> Like the days of Noah is this to me;
> As I swore that the waters of Noah
> Should never again flood the earth,
> So do I swear that I will not be wroth with thee,
> Nor chide thee.
> For though the mountains depart,
> And the hills remove,
> My kindness shall not depart from thee,
> Nor shall my covenant of peace remove;
> Says Yahweh who loves thee [Isa. 54:6–10].

In pursuance of this line of thought, the prophet assures Israel that her sins which were the cause of her distress (42:24; 43:27, 28) have now been punished in full (40:1, 2) and are, indeed, blotted out from Yahweh's memory (43:25). Not only so, but the new age in which Yahweh's favor will be gloriously manifested in behalf of his people is already at the door (41:11; 45:8; 46:11–13). The agent of Israel's deliverance from her foes is even now upon the scene and engaged in his great work. Cyrus, the Persian, was for the prophet the anointed of Yahweh for this tremendous task (41:2–6, 25; 44:28; 45:1; 46:11; 48:14, 15). Let Israel gird herself in readiness for the return home (43:14–21; 55:1–5).

82. *The problem of suffering.*—There remains, however, the difficult fact that Israel has suffered in comparison with other peoples out of all proportion to her sins. The prophet himself seems to admit this in his opening utterance (40:1). Before the people can have any very confident faith in the prophet's promises or in Yahweh's goodness toward them, some explanation must be forthcoming of the long history of suffering with its terrible climax of disaster amid which they are all now living. If Yahweh loves his people, why has he led them through so bitter an experience? What a strange manifestation of love!

Not only the love of Yahweh, but also his righteousness was at stake. How could a righteous administrator of the universe permit such perversions of right as the fate of Israel to continue indefinitely? The writer of Isaiah, chapters 40–55, meets this state of mind in two ways. The first attempt at solution of the problem is the reiteration of the declaration that the new age which is about

to dawn, and in which Yahweh will deliver Israel from all foes, will be a glorious manifestation of the righteousness of Yahweh. The prophet again and again uses the word "righteousness" as descriptive of this approaching deliverance. The term "righteousness" is for him almost synonymous with "vindication" and "deliverance." It is a usage of the word which is characteristic of this prophet as of no other writer. Nothing could be better proof that the great problem of the thought of the times was that of the righteousness of God. See, for example, such passages as 45:8, 21, 23, especially such words as these in 46:13:

> I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off;
> And my salvation shall not tarry;
> And I will place salvation in Zion
> For Israel my glory.

But promises for the future, no matter how glowing, cannot wipe out the memory of the past; and no progress can be made in winning back the people's confidence in Yahweh until some satisfactory explanation of past sufferings is forthcoming. It is at this point that Deutero-Isaiah makes his chief contribution to the thought of his day. This contribution is formulated in a series of four oracles commonly known as the Servant of Yahweh Songs, viz. (1) Isaiah 42:1–4; (2) 49: 1–6; (3) 50:4–9; and (4) 52:13—53:12.

83. *The Servant Songs* have given rise to an extensive literature in modern times. Two main questions have been under discussion: (1) are the Songs from the author of the remainder of Isaiah, chapters 40–55, or are they from some other writer? (2) who is to be understood as representing the servant of Yahweh of whom the Songs

are continually speaking? We may not take space here for the discussion of these introductory matters, which will be found fully treated in many other places.[1] We shall proceed upon the conviction that the Songs are the product of the same pen that produced Isaiah, chapters 40–55, as a whole, and that the Servant of Yahweh in the Songs, as is clearly the case outside of the Songs, is none other than the nation of Israel as a whole. Sometimes the nation is seen at its worst, but more often it is magnificently idealized and thus summoned to the achievement of its best. The Servant is positively identified with Israel in 49:3;[2] and there is no good reason to question the legitimacy of this identification. The statements in the English version of 49:5, 6 which seem to rule the nation out as a candidate for recognition as Servant disappear from the text with a better translation, viz.:

And now, Yahweh, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, says that he will restore Jacob to himself and that Israel

[1] See e.g., for the question of the unity of Isa., chaps. 40–55, B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (3d ed., 1914), pp. xix f.; J. Skinner, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, chaps. xl–lxvi (Cambridge Bible, 1917), pp. xv–xxxi, and 257–63; K. Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja* (1900), p. xv; T. K. Cheyne, *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah* (1895), pp. 237–83; G. B. Gray, *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament* (1915), pp. 184–87; S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (new edition, 1914), pp. 230–46. For the varying views of the identity of the Servant, see e.g., K. Budde, *American Journal of Theology*, III (1899), 499 ff.; T. K. Cheyne, art. "Servant of the Lord" (§§ 1–4), *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Vol. IV (1903); A. S. Peake, *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament* (1904), pp. 34–72, 180–93; S. Mowinckel, *Der Knecht Jahwäs* (1921).

[2] The defenders of a personal servant have to drop this verse as a later interpolation. But this is without warrant other than the necessities of the theory.

shall be gathered to him—for I shall be honored in the eyes of Yahweh and my God will be my strength—yea, he says, "In view of the fact that thou art my servant, it is too light a thing that I should but raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel; and so I will give thee as a light of the nations, that my deliverance may be unto the end of the earth."

84. *The first Song* (42:1–4) calls attention to the Servant, sets forth the method of his mission, and states its purpose. He is commissioned of Yahweh to cause "the right" to go forth to the nations from one end of the earth to the other. He is to accomplish this neither by force nor by ordinary methods of publicity. The impression left is that of a rather passive witness to "the right"; he serves to illustrate and illumine "the right" for the whole world. This word, "the right," is here descriptive of the religion of Yahweh as a whole. It is significant that this term should be used, since by its use attention is focused upon the ethical element in the religion of Yahweh. Yahweh, therefore, is here declaring that it is the mission of the Servant to make the Yahweh-religion known to the world and that this mission will be accomplished without fail.[1]

85. *In the second Song* (49:1–6), the servant invites the attention of the world to the fact of his divine call and the intention of Yahweh to glorify himself in Israel. He confesses that he has been discouraged at times as he has seen his labor come to naught, but he has sustained

[1] For expressions here applied to the Servant and elsewhere applied to Israel cf. 42:1 and 41:10 ("I uphold"); 41:8 ("I have chosen"); so also 43:20 and 45:4; and 44:3 ("My Spirit upon"). The Greek rendering of the Septuagint inserts in 42:1 the word "Israel" before "My chosen" and the word "Jacob" before "my servant," showing at least that this was the interpretation given to the servant by the Jews of the second and third centuries B.C.

himself with the conviction that his vindication and recompense are in Yahweh's keeping and in due time will be forthcoming. Now, he proudly declares that Yahweh, who destined him of old to be his Servant, will restore him (viz., Israel) to his own land, and not content with that will make him a "light of the nations," that the vindication of Israel and Yahweh may extend through the known world.[1]

86. *In the third Song* (50:4–9), the Servant relates the story of the long period of discipline through which Yahweh has put him and the severe character of that training, to which he submitted uncomplainingly because he had confidence in the goodness of the ultimate purpose of Yahweh. He completes this recital with a challenge to his foes to array themselves against him, assuring them that Yahweh is on his side and that therefore they can do naught but meet with ruin. As the prophet here describes the past attitude of Israel, he is indulging in a bit of imaginative idealism; for in actuality there has rarely been a more persistent and recalcitrant rebel than Israel showed itself to be under foreign domination in the pre-exilic days. But idealization of both past and future was always easy for the prophets and Deutero-Isaiah himself was master of the art.

87. *The Great Song.*—In none of the first three songs have we progressed any further in the way of explanation of Israel's past and present sufferings than the claim that these sufferings were of disciplinary value and that the chastened Israel is to be glorified and made the agent of

[1] For the same personal terms as appear in 49:1 applied to the Servant, cf. 44:2 and 46:3, where they are used in connection with Israel.

the conversion of the whole world to the religion of Yahweh. It remains for the last song (52:13—53:12) to offer an explanation of the sufferings themselves. This Song is better entitled the Glorified Servant than the Suffering Servant, as is commonly done. In the first stanza (52:13–15), Yahweh calls attention to his Servant and foretells that he will attain to exalted glory; that even as his sufferings in days gone by have amazed the world, so in the coming days nations and kings will be stricken dumb with amazement as they shall see unheard of things taking place for his good.

Behold, my Servant shall prosper;
He shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.
Just as many were amazed at thee—
So marred was his appearance from that of a man,
And his form from that of the sons of men—
Even so shall he startle many nations;
On account of him kings shall shut their mouths.
For what was not told them they shall see,
And what they have not heard they shall discern.

In the second stanza (53:1–3), the nations themselves are dramatically introduced to express their astonishment at what they see and hear. It is so entirely contrary to all that anyone could have expected. The past history of the Hebrew nation has been so disastrous that no nation was willing to be associated with so contemptible a people. Indeed so far gone was the nation on its path to ruin that it was given up for dead.

Who could have believed what we have heard?
And the arm of Yahweh—to whom was it revealed?
For he grew up before him like a suckling,
And like a root out of dry ground.
He had no form nor charm, that we should look upon him,

Nor beauty, that we should covet him;
Despised was he and abandoned of men,
A man of pain and familiar with sickness.
And as one before whom men hide their faces
He was despised, and we reckoned not with him.

In the third stanza of the Song (53:4–6), the nations continue speaking and go on to state the interpretation of the past history of Israel's suffering which they now understand. In remorseful gratitude they declare that the afflictions borne by Israel should rightfully have come upon themselves, and that Israel's bearing of his punishment has brought deliverance to them. It was the will of Yahweh that Israel should bear the penalty of the sins of the world.

Verily, our sicknesses he bore,
And our pains he carried;
But we regarded him as stricken,
Smitten of God and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
Crushed for our iniquities.
The chastisement of our welfare was upon him;
And through his stripes we were healed.
All we like sheep had gone astray;
We had turned every one to his own way;
But Yahweh made to alight upon him,
The guilt of us all.

In the fourth stanza (53:7–9), the nations complete their statement. They describe the submissive attitude of the Servant beneath all his afflictions, though he was oppressed and wronged and finally done to death, notwithstanding the fact of his innocence and integrity. Death is here, of course, a symbol of the Babylonian captivity which brought the national existence of Israel to an end.

He was oppressed and he was afflicted,
But he opened not his mouth.
Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter;
And as a ewe is dumb before her shearers,
Even so he opened not his mouth.
By oppression and by judgment he was taken away.[1]
And his generation—who gave it any thought?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
For our transgressions he was smitten to the death.[2]
And they made his grave with the wicked,
And with the rich his tomb;[3]
Though he had done no violence;
Nor was there deceit in his mouth.

In the fifth and last stanza (53:10–12), the prophet takes up the word again only to give place to Yahweh himself, who closes the Song. The stanza reiterates the statement that the suffering of the Servant was God-ordained and for the purpose of saving others from the consequences of their sin. But it goes on to repeat the thought of the opening stanza by announcing the glorification of the Servant as his reward for having borne the sin of the many.

Yet it pleased Yahweh to crush him by sickness.
If his soul would make a guilt-offering,
He should see his seed, he should prolong his life,
And the purpose of Yahweh would prosper in his hand.
Of the travail of his soul he should see and be satisfied.
Through knowledge of him the righteous one—my
Servant—should justify many;

[1] Or by a slight change of text, read with Marti: "deprived of judgment he was taken away."

[2] This involves slight changes of text which are in part suggested by the Greek version. The Hebrew text as it stands reads, "For the transgression of my people a stroke (was) to him."

[3] Hebrew = "in his deaths."

And should carry their iniquities.
Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great,
And with the strong he shall share spoil,
Because he bared his soul to the death;
But he bore the sin of many,
And interceded for transgressors.

We may now gather up the contribution of the Servant Songs to the solution of the great ethical problem of the Exile: Why has Israel suffered so terribly? How can Yahweh be considered just, if he has the power to protect his people and yet has failed to take care of them?

88. *The solution.*—In considering the answer of the Songs it will be noted that the sufferings of the Servant are all in the past. The future holds in store for him nothing but glory. The sufferings have been keen and long drawn out, but they are to yield a "far more exceeding weight of glory" in days to come. You have suffered, O Israel, only that you may have greater joy in the glorious future. Not only so, but this suffering has been of vicarious value. Israel has suffered, not for his own sins; but for the sins of the nations. Yahweh is God of the world and he is a righteous God; therefore sin must always be punished. Unpunished sin is abnormal in a moral universe. Israel has therefore received the punishment due to others. To our modern minds the question immediately presents itself, Wherein is the justice of punishing one nation for the sins of other nations? This is precisely the point at which our prophet made his contribution to the ethical thought of his day. The Hebrew world of the Exilic period had grown up amid the conception of group solidarity. That

is to say, the individual had not yet come into his full rights; he was reckoned with primarily merely as one of a social group. His identity was lost in that group. The common thought of the times was that the Hebrews of the Exilic period were suffering for the sins of Manasseh's generation. The group of the Exilic age was the same as the group of that earlier day. Individuals died but the group as such continued to live. Its life was continuous. Hence to punish the group at one point in its history for sins it had committed at another earlier stage was perfectly legitimate to a public mind that focused its attention and interest, not upon the welfare of individuals, but upon the welfare of the group as a whole. Or to punish one section or member of the group for the sins of another section or member was a common procedure. We have seen Israel smitten severely because of the sins of the king. We have seen innocent individuals sharing in the punishment meted out to the guilty, because they belonged to the same family or social group. The prophets were always concerned with the interests of the nation primarily; any attention that they gave to individuals was but secondary and was motivated by the fact that the individual was an important factor in the nation. The thinking of Israel had been done for generations largely in terms of solidarity.[1]

The prophet Deutero-Isaiah continued to think in terms of solidarity. His problem was not the welfare of individuals, but the welfare of Israel. But he took a long step forward. He widened the group concept until

[1] See the study of the rise of the sense of personal responsibility in my *Prophet and His Problems* (1914), chap. vii.

it was broad enough to include the entire world. He had thought long and earnestly upon the problem of Israel's suffering. He was continually confronted by the fact that Israel's fate was inextricably interwrought with the life of the nations round about her. He could not escape, if he had wished to do so, the knowledge that Israel and its neighbors were all bound up in the bundle of life together. Their economic, social, political, military, and religious life was all interpenetrated, each by that of every other state. Not only so, but Deutero-Isaiah and his most enlightened fellow-Hebrews had been forced by the logic of events to accept a monotheistic world. They had made Yahweh the God of the Universe. It was not a far cry from this point of view to the position that all men everywhere were the creative offspring of Yahweh. This at once gave them a tie binding all nations together into one great family under the common God and Father. But when that comes to pass, we have a field for the operation of the old principle of solidarity on a world-wide scale. So Deutero-Isaiah proceeded to solve his problem for himself and his contemporaries by giving it a world atmosphere. Israel is but one element in the world family. Yahweh has been punishing her for the sins of other members of the family. This was an extremely bold, yea, a daring step for a prophet to take in those days. The feeling of Israel toward the nations was anything but cordial; it was bitterly resentful and fiercely hostile. For a prophet to ask his people to regard themselves as members of one great family with their oppressors and as having suffered untold calamities in punishment for the sins of those same oppressors was to challenge incredulity and ridicule,

if not deadly opposition. How unacceptable that message was to Deutero-Isaiah's times and how unintelligible it was is evidenced by the fact that, so far as we have any information, not a single follower of this interpretation was forthcoming among his prophetic contemporaries and successors, and no reference even is made to this substitutionary interpretation of suffering until IV Maccabees 1:11; 9:29; and 17:21 f.

That such a world-view was possible to Deutero-Isaiah is shown by the frequency with which he recurs to the conception that Israel's mission in the world was to make Yahweh known to the nations (see 42:4, 6; 45:22, 23; 49:6, 7, 22; 51:4). He can even speak of Cyrus, king of Persia, as Yahweh's "Messiah," "whose right hand I have holden" (45:1). He conceives of the nations as coming from far countries and prostrating themselves before the Jews and acknowledging Yahweh as the only true God (45:14 f.; 54:5; 55:4 f.). It is in this connection indeed that he makes a further contribution to the interpretation of suffering in the Servant Songs themselves. The sufferings of Israel, the Servant, are declared by him not only to have paid the penalty due the nations at large for their sins, but also to have constituted the very means by which the nations are to be brought to a recognition of Yahweh as the true God and to a realization of their own sinfulness. Israel's sufferings have had not only punitive, but also redemptive value. It is as the nations behold the exaltation of the Servant which is soon to take place that they will come to a recognition of the real meaning of his sufferings. Realizing this, that Israel was suffering in their place, they will be smitten with shame, contrition, and con-

fession and thus will be brought into reconciliation with Israel's God and accept him as their own.[1]

"To transform the conception of substitutionary sacrifice into so sublime an interpretation of the significance of suffering is a spiritual achievement at which the world will ever marvel. To believe that righteous men, by moral transformation through suffering, may in the very moment of seeming defeat and humiliation be actually working out the redemptive purpose of God is to give to the world a transcendent interpretation of the deepest mystery of life. Even what human judgment declares to be a dire affliction serves the purpose of the righteous God, and although it does not cease to be a real evil, it becomes completely moralized."[2]

[1] See also E. D. Burton, J. M. Powis Smith, and G. B. Smith, *Biblical Ideas of Atonement* (1909), pp. 34–38; and for a more complete presentation of the interpretation here given, see J. M. Powis Smith, "The Ethical Significance of Isaiah, Chapter 53," *Journal of Religion*, III (1923), 132–40.

[2] G. B. Smith, in E. D. Burton, J. M. Powis Smith, G. B. Smith, *Biblical Ideas of Atonement* (1909), p. 279.

PART III

THE MORALS OF JUDAISM

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROGRAM OF JUDAISM

89. *The two sources of information* for this chapter are the Book of Ezekiel and the Holiness Code. These two come together naturally, for they were produced at about the same time and they are so alike in spirit and method that they have been regarded by some scholars as the products of one and the same author.[1] In point of chronological sequence, they belong to the period preceding the work of the prophet treated in our last chapter; but they are the first expression of a new spiritual attitude in Israel which continued to exercise a dominant interest all through its later history, while Deutero-Isaiah brought the career of prophecy to a splendid climax and clearly marks the close of a period of creative spiritual vision.

90. *Nature of Judaism.*—The new type of thought and feeling introduced by Ezekiel is best known as Judaism. Ezekiel has been aptly entitled the "Father of Judaism." There are four outstanding characteristics of this type of thought. First of all, it is narrow and exclusive. It is intensely particularistic. It is interested in Jews, first, last, and all the time. The broad, catholic spirit of Deutero-Isaiah is wholly wanting. The present world ought to be, and the coming age will be, a Jewish world, with all other peoples existing only for the glory of the Jews and the God of the Jews.

[1] See e.g., Graf, *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des alten Testaments* (1866), pp. 81–83; Colenso; and Horst, *Lev. 17–26 und Hezekiel* (1881).

A second aspect of Judaism is its emphasis upon the importance of ritual and its legalistic interpretation of religion. Scarcely anything is left to the spontaneous expression of the free, exuberant spirit. Everything is reduced to ceremonial order and brought into line with legalistic prescription. Almost the entire life-activity of the individual is ultimately brought within the scope of legalistic and ceremonial enactment. Religion and life become a procession of deeds properly performed. Thereby the attempt is made to render the whole of life pleasing to God by keeping out of its area of being everything that is evil and filling it up with innumerable acts of ceremonial and legal piety. By such means is the favor of God secured and freedom from further disaster guaranteed. A third facet of this system reveals its splendidly idealistic disregard for the actual facts of life. Its ideals must be carried through at all costs. Nothing shall stand in their way. This gives a certain air of unreality to much of the content of Judaism. For example, Ezekiel, in arranging the holdings of the tribes in Palestine for the coming Golden Age, gives them each an equal width of territory, descending from the north to the south, regardless of the varying width of the strip of land between the Mediterranean and the desert, and regardless of the fact that some portions would fall in the fertile plain of Esdraelon while others would be made up largely of relatively barren mountain range. He also arbitrarily and daringly introduces a river as taking its rise in the temple mount and making its way down to the Dead Sea, fructifying and vitalizing all that it touches. For such men hard facts give way to lovely dreams. Having seen the disappearance of all chance

of achievement of their goal for the nation through natural means, they take refuge in the supernatural. Being freed from the necessity of conforming to the requirements of reality, they give free reign to their imaginations. In dealing with an imaginary world, they ignore the facts of experience and freely create situations and conditions that would be unintelligible in a real world. Cutting loose from reality, they are afloat upon a boundless ocean of fantasy. We read their writings not as the reports of mariners returning from the discovery of new worlds, but as the glowing visions of eager hearts forced to stay at home. The fourth main feature of this Judaistic conception of life was its fondness for eschatological and apocalyptic interpretations of the past, present, and future. In brief, this was an expression of despair as to the possibilities of self-improvement on the part of the human race in general and the Jewish people in particular, and a corresponding dependence upon and hope in the goodness and power of God. All betterment of human society was thought of as coming down from above rather than from the hearts of men. The Judaistic pictures of the future, therefore, abound in the miraculous and the supernatural and involve a complete overthrow of the present world-order and the substitution in its place of a Kingdom of God coming down from heaven. In illustration of this may be cited the lurid description of the gathering of the world-forces under Gog of Magog upon the field of Armageddon and their destruction at the hands of God, the people of God, viz., Israel, having no part in the overthrow other than that of burying the dead and cleaning up the battle-field (Ezek., chaps. 38 and 39). A different type of illustration is furnished by

Ezekiel, chapters 40–48, in which is given a constitution for the government of the coming messianic kingdom. This is a strange mixture of reality and unreality, a moving picture of things more or less as they are, mingled with such things as never were on land or sea.

91. *Ezekiel and his problem.*—The progenitor of the Judaistic point of view was the prophet Ezekiel.[1] He was a member of the group of exiles carried to Babylon in 597 B.C. His prophetic activity reached as far as 570 at least (cf. 29:17), and perhaps somewhat farther. As a prophet he was confronted by the same problem as his compatriots, the problem to the solution of which Deutero-Isaiah later gave himself, viz., "Why does Israel suffer?" This was the overwhelming religious problem of the age. An answer to it must be found if Israel's faith in Yahweh was to be preserved. To this task Ezekiel set himself bravely. His countrymen left behind in Jerusalem were discouraged and were losing their grip upon Yahweh. They were saying,

> Yahweh sees us not;
> Yahweh has forsaken the land [Ezek. 8:12; 9:9].

His fellow-sojourners in Babylon had even more occasion than those left behind in Jerusalem to doubt Yahweh's power and justice and they were not slow to give expression to such sentiments. Ezekiel quotes them as saying, with biting irony:

[1] The best commentaries on Ezekiel are: A. B. Davidson and A. W. Streane, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (Cambridge Bible, 1916); W. R. Lofthouse, *Ezekiel* (New Century Bible, 1909); C. H. Toy, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel—A New English Translation with Explanatory Notes* (1899); R. Kraetzschmar, *Das Buch Ezechiel* (1900); A. Bertholet, *Das Buch Hesekiel* (1897); and J. Herrmann, *Ezechielstudien* (1908).

The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge [Ezek. 18:2]!

And more bluntly,

The way of Yahweh is not fair [Ezek. 18:25, 29].

Ezekiel's answer to such charges and complaints is direct and forceful. Israel has outdone the nations in her wickedness (5:5–8), and the exile is the well-earned punishment for sin. The sins of the present generation are so heinous that even Sodom, Gomorrah, and Samaria, the outstanding embodiments of evil thus far, cannot compare with Jerusalem in iniquity (16:44–52). There is no need to seek the cause of the suffering in the past; the present is quite equal to the responsibility of furnishing the reason for Yahweh's wrath. Ezekiel is tireless in the enumeration and denunciation of the sins of his people. These catalogues of sin include not only ritualistic offenses, but also numerous violations of the moral law, such as murder, oppression of the poor and weak, disrespect toward parents, lewd conduct, adultery, usury, bribery, violation of sexual tabus, talebearing, robbery, and juggling with weights and measures (Ezek. 9:9; 11:12; 22:7, 9–12, 29).

92. *Among the more heinous sins* of Ezekiel's list are three that he particularly emphasizes. He charges the prophets of his day with being so far lost to a sense of right that they deliberately prophesy what they know to be lies; and they do it for the purpose of making a living thereby (13:1–23; 22:25 f.). In estimating the value of this testimony, allowance must be made for the influence of *odium theologicum*. Ezekiel and the prophets he denounces are representatives of opposing points of view. Each declares the other to be in the

wrong, and, as not infrequently happens, charges of moral laxity fly back and forth. It may well have been that the opponents of Ezekiel were just as honest in their mistaken position as Ezekiel was himself. But that Ezekiel should recognize such sincerity would be asking for greater tolerance and charity than the representatives of that age possessed. A second offense that is held to have been in and of itself a sufficient warrant for the overthrow of Jerusalem is the fact that the graves of the kings were located in immediate proximity to the temple walls (43:7–9). The third great crime is that they have sacrificed their own sons and daughters to foreign gods (16:20; 20:26; 23:39). This horrible practice, carried on in the name of religion, and apparently for a while at least as a regular part of the Yahweh religion itself, aroused Ezekiel's indignation and met with his unsparing denunciation.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem who were not transported into exile seem to have been even worse than the exiles in Ezekiel's judgment. He declares that a few survivors will be left from the final destruction of Jerusalem for the purpose of publishing abroad the terrible wickedness of the city; so that the world at large may know that Yahweh did not destroy it without sufficient warrant (12:16). He goes even further and assures his fellow-exiles that when they shall see the surviving remnant of the population of Jerusalem they will be consoled by the revelation of their moral turpitude for the destruction of the city:

> Behold, therein shall be left a remnant,
> Those brought forth, both sons and daughters.
> Behold, they shall be brought forth unto you;

And you will see their way and their doings;
And you will be consoled over the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem,
All that I have brought upon her;
For they will console you when you see their way and their doings;
And you will know that not for nothing have I done all that I have done therein.
It is the oracle of the Lord Yahweh [14:22, 23].

93. *The cause of sin.*—One of the most interesting points of view in this interesting book of Ezekiel's is his explanation of the origin of this state of outbreaking sin in Israel. Ezekiel seems to have been a thoroughgoing monotheist. He has no room or function for other responsible agents in the world-order alongside of Yahweh. Other and later writers would have attributed this glaring wickedness to the machinations of Satan. But Ezekiel does not shrink from laying the final responsibility upon the shoulders of Yahweh himself. He says that Israel had gone so far in iniquity that Yahweh determined to destroy them and to that end gave them wicked statutes and ordinances, the observance of which would give him full moral justification for their destruction.

Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good,
And ordinances whereby they should not live;
And I polluted them in their own gifts,
In that they set apart all that openeth the womb,
That I might destroy them,
To the end that they might know that I am Yahweh [Ezek. 20:25, 26].

Here, as in the story of David's census in II Samuel 24:1, no moral difficulty was felt in making Yahweh incite a people to sin and then punish them drastically

for that sin. The emphasis is rather upon the necessity of furnishing sufficient justification in the conduct of the people for the fearful punishment they are undergoing.

94. *No vicarious righteousness.*—In his denial of what was evidently a popular doctrine, Ezekiel reveals another phase of his ethical system. In 14:12–20, he flatly contradicts the current opinion as to the extent of a good man's extenuating influence in behalf of his countrymen. There he maintains that God's purpose to destroy a wicked people can be in no way deflected by the presence among that people of a few righteous individuals. Even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in such a community they would not avail to save it from punishment; the best they could do would be to save themselves. There is no place for vicarious righteousness in Ezekiel's moral program. Here he departs from the standpoint of the narrative regarding the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and Abraham's plea for those doomed cities; and he would have found it hard to accept Deutero-Isaiah's interpretation of Israel's sufferings as redeeming mankind at large (see chap. 7). He is concerned here with emphasizing the inevitability and completeness of the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

95. *Hope for the future.*—Though Ezekiel is thus intent upon justifying Yahweh's punishment of Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem, he is not ready to stop there. He encourages his smitten contemporaries by holding out to them the promise of a glorious future for the survivors of the great chastisement. He first of all takes up the chief nations individually and portrays the destructive overthrow awaiting them each in turn (chaps. 25–32). He particularly points out that this

punishment is coming to them because of the way in which they have abused and oppressed the Hebrews (see 28:24; 35:5, 10, 12). He then passes on to a vivid and lurid description of the final overthrow at Armageddon, on the soil of Palestine, of all the foes of Yahweh and of Israel in one great battle wherein all these wicked peoples are destroyed. There is no place in Ezekiel's scheme of things for foreigners. But with all the foreigners destroyed and the Hebrews themselves reduced to a mere handful, the practical question presents itself as to the available source of supply for the citizenship of the new world-order. To this question, Ezekiel gives a ready answer in chapter 37. He takes refuge in the inscrutable wisdom and inexhaustible resources of Yahweh. In pictorial fashion he says to his people, "You wonder whence the population for the new golden age is coming. But consider now: it is inexplicable to you how Yahweh can bring the dead back to life; and yet we know that he can and does do it. Even so, though we know not how, Yahweh can and will bring to life again our dead nation and restore us to our own land and establish us as his people." For this restored and purified nation, he works out a religious program and constitution in chapters 40–48. By living in accordance with its provisions, the future generations of the people of Yahweh will be guaranteed against the repetition of such disasters as have befallen the generation of the Exiles. This is an attempt to legalize and crystallize the old dogma that piety must yield prosperity and sin involve adversity. It goes further than heretofore in that it undertakes to prescribe the course of conduct for the community more definitely and specifically than

ever before. To live in conformity to the program here outlined is piety, and such a course of life is a guaranty of the divine favor.

96. *Individual responsibility.*—Thus far we have been dealing with Ezekiel's attitude toward the problem of the nation's suffering and have seen how he sought to justify that suffering on the one hand, and so to clear the reputation of Yahweh; and, on the other hand, how he held out hope to the surviving remnant and thus braced them for endurance of their hard lot until the final deliverance of Israel should come. But the problem of individual welfare was also acute and demanded his attention. The rights of personality and the importance of the individual in society were but slowly realized in Israel. In the earlier days, social solidarity had made it hard for the individual to find recognition on his own merits. He counted primarily and in many ways only as a member of his group, whether family, tribe, or nation. But certain influences in the developing civilization of Israel were working persistently toward bringing the individual to the fore and, with the tragic experiences of the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of the population to a new habitat, the individual finally came into his own.[1] The contemporaries of Ezekiel clearly recognized the rights of the individual; and it is interesting to find Ezekiel driven to the formulation of his doctrine of individual responsibility by a sneer at the old theology that was current at that time:

> The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
> And the children's teeth are set on edge [Ezek. 18:2]!

[1] For a study of the historical development of the idea of individual responsibility before God, see chap. vii in my *Prophet and His Problems* (1914).

This is a protest on the part of the people against the injustice of Yahweh's course of action: "The way of Yahweh is not fair" (Ezek. 18:25, 29; 33:20). A man ought not to suffer for the conduct of his parents. Ezekiel accepts that proposition fully and works it out in detail. He declares that all souls are equal in the sight of Yahweh, the creator and possessor of all, and that only those who sin are punished (Ezek. 18:4, 20). Yahweh never visits chastisement upon a pious son for his father's sin nor vice versa; consequently if a man fall into trouble, he should first scrutinize his own conduct to discover the cause of the disaster and not seek to evade responsibility and guilt by placing it upon the shoulders of his parents.

With the natural enthusiasm of the proponent of a new doctrine, Ezekiel carries his individualistic principle too far. He seems to lay emphasis upon deeds rather than upon character. It is not what a man is that counts so much as what a man does. It is not the general trend and purpose of a man's life that determines his fate, so much as momentary variations from his normal program (Ezek. 3:16–21; 33:12–20). There is a somewhat atomistic quality about this point of view; emphasis is laid upon the details of life rather than upon its organic unity. On the other hand, it must be recognized that Ezekiel's teaching on this matter would tend to stress the importance of persistent continuance in well-doing as the only guaranty of uniform prosperity.

Ezekiel did not fail to apply his conception of the individual's responsibility before God for his own deeds to the conduct of his own life. He is the first and only

Hebrew, so far as we know, to take the "cure of souls" as a burden upon his own heart. He feels a personal responsibility for the welfare of his contemporaries individually and expects to be called to account for the faithful discharge of this responsibility. He is a watchman for his fellow-Israelites and will fail in his duty at his own peril (Ezek. 3:16–21; 33: 1–9). He recognizes this as his mission from God, who does everything in his power to save men from sin and its consequences, not desiring that any should perish:

> As I live, says the Lord Yahweh,
> Am I pleased that the wicked should die,
> And not rather that the wicked should turn from his way and live?
> Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways,
> For why will you die, O house of Israel [Ezek. 33:11; cf. 18:23, 32]?

97. *The ideal man.*—Ezekiel has not left us in any doubt as to what his ideal of a just and righteous man is. He has put himself upon record on this subject fully and repeatedly (see Ezek. 18:5–20; 22:7, 9–12; 45: 9–12; 46:16–18). The moral element in Ezekiel's requirements is clear and prominent. The good man who shall enjoy Yahweh's favor must be just and law-abiding, not an adulterer, nor a thief, nor a usurer, nor an oppressor, but one who makes good on his promises and pledges, is generous to the poor and needy, and respects and honors his parents. Similar requirements are laid upon the rulers and particular stress is laid upon the necessity of just weights and measures, the standards for which are expressly indicated. While Ezekiel makes no place for foreigners in his scheme of

things, he does provide for the protection of the interests of the "stranger," i.e., the defenseless foreigner who has forsaken his own people and placed himself under the aegis of Israel and Israel's God (Ezek. 47:22, 23).

98. *Ritual* vs. *ethics*.—Though Ezekiel gives a large place to the moral element in life, it is nevertheless not a large enough place, because it is not the supreme place. He has lost something of the ethical passion of the earlier prophets. He is content to put ethics and ritual side by side upon the same level. His constitution for the messianic state is far more concerned with the necessity of ritualistic regularity than with the demand for moral integrity. Eating "with the blood" is for him a heinous offense to be placed alongside of adultery (33:25, 26). The ritualistic and the moral are coupled together in his catalogue of vices and virtues (Ezek. 18:5–20). Ritual has within itself a wonderful power of expansion. Give it a foot and it will take an ell. Ezekiel let the camel's nose of ritual into the sanctuary of religion, and ritual ended by occupying nearly the whole structure. The soulless legalism of later Judaism was the direct descendant of Ezekiel's ritualistic interpretation of religion.

99. *The new birth*.—In closing our survey of Ezekiel's contribution to the moral life of his times, one other aspect of his views requires mention. Ezekiel was under no illusions as to the inclinations and purposes of his countrymen. As he contemplated them and looked back upon their history, he came to the conclusion that the hope of Israel lay not in his countrymen, but in God. He could see no likelihood of moral or religious betterment in their unaided efforts. He was thoroughly

pessimistic as to the possibilities of the human spirit in and of itself. But he had an unlimited confidence in Yahweh and in his good purpose for Israel, and he saw that purpose working itself out in the divine regeneration of the Hebrew people. They cannot make themselves good; but Yahweh will do it for them:

> And I will give them one heart,
> And I will put a new spirit within you;
> And I will remove the stony heart out of their flesh,
> And I will give them a heart of flesh;
> That they may walk in my statutes,
> And keep mine ordinances and do them;
> And they shall be my people,
> And I will be their God [Ezek. 11:19, 20; see also 36:25–27; and cf. 18:31].

This and the promise of the "new covenant" written in the heart that is found in Jer. 31:31–34[1] are the earliest known expressions of the teaching of the new birth of which Christianity has made such good use. It emphasizes splendidly the profoundly moral principle that true goodness must find its inspiration and motif coming from within and not from without the heart of man. Ezekiel's Messianic Kingdom is therefore to be composed of Jewish citizens who have been miraculously converted from the passions and purposes of their former selves and given new hearts that shall make them love and long for the ways of righteousness and of God.

[1] Jer. 31:31–34 is probably a later addition to the Book of Jeremiah; see the commentaries on Jeremiah by Movers, and Duhm; also Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I, 643, and Smend, *Lehrbuch der Alttestamentliche Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 239–41; and N. Schmidt, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, cols. 934, 2391; but the genuineness of the passage is vigorously maintained by Giesebrecht, Cornill, Peake, L. E. Binns, and W. J. Moulton (*The Expositor* [1906], pp. 370 ff.).

100. *The Holiness Code.*—The details of the program of Judaism, especially as it applies to the life of the individual, are worked out in the Holiness Code.[1] This Code appears mainly in Lev. 17–26.[2] It is a codification of customs and laws that in large part had grown up in the generations preceding Ezekiel; but these were newly edited and revised somewhere about Ezekiel's time; and in its present form the Code reflects essentially the same general conception of religion and life as does the prophet. Its dominant idea is that of holiness, which is the end aimed at in all its enactments. This fact suggested the name applied to it by modern scholars. The ethical material in this Code is abundant, a fact that makes it stand out in striking contrast with the rest of the priestly law. Our treatment of it, owing to the exigencies of space, must be all too brief and bare. It may be grouped under five categories, (1) the attitude toward woman, (2) the treatment of slaves, (3) protection of the weak and poor, (4) the sense of justice, and (5) the ethical motives of the legislation.

101. *Estimate of woman.*—It is significant of the relatively low estimate of woman that she comes into consideration almost wholly from the point of view of sexual relations. The only exception is that children are enjoined under penalty of death to refrain from cursing mother and father and to show them godly fear

[1] This term was first introduced (in its German form, *Das Heiligkeitsgesetz*) by Klostermann, *Zeitschrift für lutherische Theologie* for 1877, pp. 401 ff.

[2] Other fragments of this code are found according to some interpreters in Exod. 31:13, 14*a*; Lev. 11:43–45; and Num. 15:37–41. For a careful study and analysis of this code, see Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1914), pp. 47–59.

(Lev. 19:3; 20:9). A man may not have two sisters to wife at the same time (Lev. 18:18), a striking departure from the patriarchal practice of earlier times. Nor may a man marry a mother and her daughter at the same time on penalty of all three being burned together (Lev. 20:14). Such laws presuppose the right of a man to a plurality of wives; they simply restrict the range of his selection somewhat. Adultery is prohibited, the penalty being death for both participants (Lev. 18:20; 20:10). Sodomy and unnatural lust are punished by death (Lev. 18:22; 20:15, 16). Sexual relations are forbidden to a man with his sister, his son's wife, his father's wife, his aunts on either side of the family, his brother's wife, his uncle's wife, or a menstruating woman (Lev. 20:11, 12, 17–21). Fathers are forbidden to make harlots of their daughters (Lev. 19:29); and a priest's daughter found in such practice is burned (Lev. 21:9).

102. *Slavery* does not receive much attention. Foreigners and the children of "strangers" may be held in perpetual slavery (Lev. 25:44–46); but all Hebrew slaves must be freed in the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25: 8–13). The poor Hebrew who sells himself to a fellow-Hebrew is not to be treated with rigor as a slave and must be fed in the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:39–43, 46). If he sells himself to a "stranger," he is to be treated as a hired servant and may be redeemed at any time, either by a kinsman or by himself; and in any case he must be freed in the Jubilee year (Lev. 25:47–55). If a man violates a slave woman that is betrothed, he is not to be slain (she was only a slave!); he merely brings the guilt-offering and is forgiven (Lev. 19:20f.). These regulations regarding slaves are very meager and inade-

quate and show little consideration for the rights of slaves as human beings. But the attitude of the times on the subject of slavery, as attested by the conduct of Jeremiah's contemporary slave-holders toward their slaves, made it very difficult to initiate or enforce legislation protecting the slave in any effective way.

103. *The needy classes* in Israel were the poverty-stricken, the "stranger," the Levite, the defective, the widow, and the fatherless. The last two receive no consideration at the hands of the Holiness Code. The poor-relief measures seem rather haphazard and unmethodical; but the spirit of the law is good. At harvest time, the corners of the field must not be reaped, nor the grain-fields gleaned, nor the vineyards picked clean; the gleanings of all must be left for the poor (Lev. 19:9 f.; 23:22). The poor Hebrew must neither be oppressed nor robbed; nor should the wages of a servant be kept overnight (Lev. 19:13). The deaf must not be cursed, nor the blind caused to stumble (Lev. 19:14); for in both cases the victims have no chance to guard themselves against danger. The "stranger" is not to be taken advantage of, but to be treated like a fellow-Hebrew; "thou shalt love him as thyself" (Lev. 19:33, 34). The same law should apply to the "stranger" and home-born (Lev. 24:22). Indeed, in urging proper treatment of the poor Hebrew, the law insists that he shall be treated like a "stranger" (Lev. 25:35–40). Of neither should any interest be taken upon loans of money or food. The financial interest of the Levite is guarded in that his lands are inalienable; and his town property if sold, is subject to a perpetual right of redemption at any time and must return to him or his heirs in the

year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:29–34). The general and all inclusive principle inculcated is, "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19:18, 34). The neighbor here is of course a member of the Hebrew community. It was the task of Stoicism[1] and later Christianity to give to this idea an unlimited scope of application that was not present in the minds of the originators of this precept.

104. *The Code's sense of justice* is all pervasive and penetrating. The common vices and crimes are prohibited, viz., theft, cheating, lying, false swearing, and murder (Lev. 19:11, 12, 13; 24:17–21*a*). The pious Hebrew must not be a talebearer or slanderer (Lev. 19:16).[2] The honest business man will not use false weights and measures (Lev. 19:35, 36). A Hebrew who is maimed by his fellow-Hebrews is entitled to the satisfaction of seeing his injurer suffer the same injury (Lev. 24:19, 20). Yet a Hebrew must not bear grudge against his fellow, hate him secretly, nor take vengeance (Lev. 19:17, 18). It is better to speak out the wrath that is within than to cherish it and so "bear sin" because of it. In the administration of justice there must be no discrimination either in favor of the rich or of the poor. The judge must be absolutely impartial, moved by no considerations aside from justice (Lev. 19:15).

The regulations regarding the year of Jubilee reckon with the requirements of justice in various details. The main provisions of the institution are (1) that in the fiftieth year all landed property shall return to the

[1] See R. D. Hicks, *Stoic and Epicurean.*

[2] The phrase in vs. 16, "thou shalt not stand up against the blood of thy neighbor," probably means "thou shalt not endanger thy neighbor's life by false testimony." See the commentaries, *ad loc.*

families that originally held title to it; (2) that all Hebrew slaves receive their freedom in the year of Jubilee; (3) that all farm lands rest from tillage in the fiftieth year as well as in every seventh year (Lev. 25:2–13). This makes it necessary to evaluate property in buying and selling in proportion to the number of years remaining before the Jubilee (Lev. 25:14–16). If a poor man must sell his land, it is the duty of his kinsman to buy it. But if there is no kinsman, the seller is given the right to reclaim his land at any time that he may be able to buy it back. In such a case, the buyer pays on the basis of the number of years remaining before the Jubilee. At the worst, the poor man or his family recovers the property without purchase in the fiftieth year (Lev. 25:23–28). A house in a walled city may be redeemed only within the first year after the sale and it does not go back to the original owners in the Jubilee, though houses in unwalled villages are treated like farm lands (Lev. 25:29, 34). This shows some recognition of the realities of the complex economic and social life of the large town. A poor Hebrew sold to a "stranger" may be redeemed at any time, account being taken of the time he has still to serve before the Jubilee (Lev. 25:47–55). The most striking proof of the unreality of this legislation in general is the provision made in view of the fact that the regular Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year come in immediate succession. How shall the people live when the land is out of cultivation for two years in succession? The answer is simple beyond belief; the forty-eighth year will produce crops sufficiently abundant to provide sustenance for the remaining two years (Lev. 25:19–22).

105. *The ethical motives* brought to bear in the Holiness Code are quite tangible and specific. For the most part, it is a case of rewards and punishments. These are listed in chapter 26:3–41. The notable thing about this list is the materialistic character of the considerations involved and the preponderance of the punishments over the rewards. The appeal is evidently largely made to the element of fear. This is attested also by a survey of the Code as a whole. The death penalty occurs with appalling frequency (18:29; 20:1–6, 9–12, 14, 15, 17; 18:21–29; 20:27; 22:3; 23:29, 30; 24:10–17, 21*b*, 23). Among the methods of inflicting the death penalty are stoning and burning (20:14, 27; 24:16). The national punishment is exile, which is national death (Lev. 18:26 ff.; 20:22). Furthermore, ethics is depreciated, as in Ezekiel, by being put upon the same level with ritual (see e.g., 17:3–16; 23:28 f.; 24:10–16, 23). The saving element in the Code is its recognition of the law of love to which attention has already been called (§ 103). If this law had been given full sway, the Holiness Code, with its insistence upon justice, would have been ethically supreme. It is enough praise, however, for one Code that it should have formulated one such principle.

CHAPTER IX

THE RETURN TO REALITY

106. *The fifth century.*—In this chapter we shall deal with the moral conditions and ideals in Judaism during the latter part of the sixth century and the whole of the fifth century B.C. The sources of information for this period are the books of Haggai, Zechariah, chapters 1–8, Malachi, Obadiah, Isaiah, chapters 56–66, Zechariah, chapters 9–14, Ezra, Nehemiah, Ruth, and Jonah. These books represent a variety of points of view and deal with many aspects of the situation that confronted Judaism during this period. It was in general a period of disillusionment. The high hopes that had been stimulated and encouraged in every possible way by prophets like Ezekiel and the author of Isaiah, chapters 40–55, had failed of fulfilment and the mounting spirits of Jewry were dashed to earth. The exiles had been led to look for a speedy manifestation of the messianic glory and, in so far as they had returned to Palestine, had returned in anticipation of being sharers in the speedy triumph of the coming Messiah. But the Persian monarchs continued to rule the world. The return to Judah was a painfully slow and long-drawn-out process, being participated in for the most part only by the most idealistic and zealous of the exiles. The practical, business-like members of the exilic group had quickly adjusted themselves to the ways and conditions of their new home in Babylonia and had built themselves into its social and economic life. They had gained a place

for themselves and were not any more anxious to leave behind their trade and business in Babylon, in order to start afresh in the broken and ruined life of Canaan, than the Jewish merchants and bankers of the United States are to embrace the opportunity of returning to Palestine today. They were not attracted by the invitation to announce genuine "Sacrifice Sales," and to put up such signs as "Selling Out," "Going Out of Business." Furthermore, the exiles of 536 B.C. were for the most part a generation born in Babylonia; they had never known Jerusalem; it was to them little more than a name with some sentimental associations of a slight and tenuous nature. By reason of these things, a very small number had gone back to Judah. So the population of Jerusalem and Judah was made up of the descendants of the weakest and poorest of the land, whom the Babylonians had not thought it worth while to transport to Babylon, and of a slight sprinkling of enthusiasts who had come back from Babylon and were probably not significant enough either in personal quality or in numbers to effect any great change in the progress of affairs in Judah. Still further, as we learn from Haggai, chapter 1, the crop production in Canaan during these first years of the return was disappointingly inadequate. The outlook, therefore, was gloomy and the hearts of men were low.

107. *The task of Haggai and Zechariah.*—Amid such a situation Haggai and Zechariah felt themselves called to the prophetic office in 520 B.C.[1] They were therefore

[1] The best commentaries on Haggai and Zechariah are by H. G. Mitchell (International Critical Commentary, 1912); W. E. Barnes (Cambridge Bible, 1917); George Adam Smith (Expositor's Bible, 1898); S. R. Driver (Century Bible, 1906); W. Nowack (*Hand-Kommentar zum Alten Testament*, 3d ed., 1922); K. Marti (*Kurzer Hand-commentar zum Alten Testament*, 1904).

confronted by the same problem as their predecessors, with its seriousness accentuated by the longer duration of the suffering. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." It was necessary that Haggai and Zechariah should find some explanation for the long delay in the coming of deliverance and prosperity. They must do something to keep alive faith in Yahweh and to maintain unimpaired the old doctrine that prosperity is the reward of piety and disaster is the punishment of sin. To this end they must find sin great enough to account for the continuance of the bitter experience of suffering. Such a sin was forthcoming, according to the judgment of both prophets, in the failure of the Jews to rebuild the ruined temple in Jerusalem (Hag. 1:2–11; Zech. 8:9 ff.). The people responded to this challenge and straightway began the work of reconstruction (Hag. 1:12–15). They are encouraged to persist in this praiseworthy enterprise by glowing promises of a brilliant future (Hag. 2:1–9). The people were too impatient to wait long for results and they grew restless as the hard times continued notwithstanding their activity in temple building. The prophet assures them that the messianic age is near at hand with its glory and prosperity and two months later (just three months from the day when the rebuilding was begun) he reasons with them to the effect that they can hardly expect that a few short months of pious work upon the temple should at once overcome the effect of the deep-rooted and heinous sin of which they have been guilty (Hag. 2:10–14). But he assures them that the longed-for change will immediately come (Hag. 2:15–19), and that their leader Zerubbabel shall rule over them as messianic prince (Hag. 2:20–23).

108. *The message of Zechariah.*—Zechariah was one with Haggai in all his activity and message. He firmly believed that obedience to Yahweh meant success and prosperity and that disobedience was responsible for the punishment and exile of his people. He calls attention to the preaching of the great prophets and shows how recent history has verified it (Zech. 1:2–6). He emphasizes the ethical element in the preaching of the former prophets who demanded justice, mercy, compassion, and kindness to the poor (7:8–10); and he insists upon these same virtues as prerequisite to the coming of the Messiah (8:16 f.). He recognizes the need of divine aid to prepare Judah for the coming of the messianic age and so describes in figurative terms the cleansing process that shall purge all wickedness out of the land (Zech. 5:1–11). But the bulk of his preaching is devoted to promises to Jewry and to kindling the hopes of his people to white heat. Prosperity is at hand; the temple will be finished; and Jerusalem is to be rebuilt (Zech. 1:7–17). Foreign foes are to meet with well-merited defeat and destruction and the city of Jerusalem is to overflow with population (Zech. 2:1–9). The exiles should return home, for Yahweh is aroused to aid his people and will henceforth dwell with them and protect them, while many nations will join Yahweh and his people and accept their leadership (Zech. 2:10–13; 8:20–23). The iniquity of Judah is pardoned and the long-expected Messiah is near at hand (Zech. 3:1–10). These things are to be brought about not by physical force but by the spiritual power of Yahweh, who through his messianic priest and king will rule over all (Zech. 4:1–6*a*, 10*b*, 11, 13; and 4:6*b*–10*a*).

109. *The messianic hope.*—The most striking thing about the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah is the fact that they regarded Zerubbabel, their own contemporary governor, as the man destined to be the Messiah. They actually went so far as to place the messianic crown upon his head (Zech. 6:9–13).[1] This act shows how genuinely in earnest these prophets were in their preaching. They had no doubt about their message. To do a thing like that almost certainly would arouse the antagonism of the Persian government, which would speedily learn of this seditious movement. The result would be fatal to Jewish hopes for the time being. It is perhaps significant that after the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah there was a period of quiescence, generally known as "the sixty years of silence."

Zechariah closes his preaching with a picture of the prosperity awaiting Jerusalem in the messianic age. The city will be famous for its truth. Old people will be seen upon its streets. Boys and girls will fill its thoroughfares. Exiles will come flocking to it from all quarters. Whereas prior to the building of the temple there was no peace nor prosperity, now all nature will

[1] Zech. 6:9–13 has undergone some change from its original form. As the text now stands it is Joshua that is crowned. But the passage becomes more intelligible if Zerubbabel be given the crown. With the aid of the Septuagint we may translate vss. 11 ff. as follows: "Take silver and gold and make a crown and set it upon the head of Zerubbabel; and say unto them, Thus says Yahweh of hosts: Behold a man, whose name is Branch, and he will branch forth from where he stands, and he will build the temple of Yahweh; and he will bear glory; and he will sit upon his throne and rule; and a priest will be at his right hand; and there will be peaceful counsel between the two of them. And the crown shall be for Helem, etc." The other passages showing that the messianic hope centered in Zerubbabel are Hag. 2:23; Zech. 3:8; 4:6–10.

combine to bless Judah. The purpose of Yahweh toward his land and people is good, provided they do but love truth and peace. The renown of Judah will become world-wide and people from every nation will seek to attach themselves to her people because of the evidence that God is with them (Zech. 8:1–23).

110. *The prophet Malachi* was one of the first to break the sixty years of silence. He spoke about the middle of the fifth century B.C., probably just before the appearance of Nehemiah at Jerusalem.[1] His task was essentially the same as that of his predecessors. He had to explain why Yahweh had so long delayed his coming and he must also revive an almost dead faith in Yahweh and his purpose to bless his nation. The zeal called forth by Haggai and Zechariah had rapidly cooled. The reaction from the enthusiasm that had built the temple was violent. The conditions now were just as forbidding and unpromising as they had ever been. All Judah's labor and sacrifice were apparently in vain. The people were discouraged and dejected. Many of them were ready to abandon Yahweh just as he had abandoned them. They were saying, what is the use of worshiping Yahweh? It does not pay to be pious. Yahweh has no interest in justice and righteousness. Malachi says,

> You have made Yahweh weary by your statements.
> Yet you say, How have we made him weary?
> In that you say, Every one that does evil is good in the eyes of Yahweh, and in them he takes pleasure [Mal. 2:17].

[1] On the date of Malachi, see my commentary in the "International Critical Series" (1912); Driver (Century Bible, 1906); George Adam Smith (Expositor's Bible, 1898); Nowack (*Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*, 3d ed., 1922); Marti (*Kurzer Hand-commentar zum Alten Testament*, 1904); C. H. Cornill (*Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament*, 1907)

And again:—"You say, 'It is useless to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his charge and that we have walked in mourning before Yahweh of hosts? And now—we are deeming the arrogant fortunate; yea, the doers of wickedness are built up; yea, they test God and escape'" (Mal. 3:14, 15).

The value of piety is here quite frankly put upon a commercial basis. Piety ought to pay; but it does not pay; why then be pious? Malachi accepts this valuation of piety. It is his own philosophy of life as much as that of his listeners. He has no other ethical or religious theory or program. This was a terribly hard doctrine to live by in that period. The material and tangible rewards of life were passing Judah by consistently. But Malachi and similarly minded prophets never thought of changing their theory to fit the facts or of supplementing the theory with any new amendments or modifications. Malachi fell back upon two old methods of meeting the problem, the same methods that Haggai and Zechariah had employed.

111. *The argument of Malachi.*—Malachi first cleared out of the way the charge that Yahweh did not love his people. His method of refutation is noteworthy. He brings forward as the most convincing proof possible of Yahweh's love the fact that Edom has recently suffered a terrible disaster. This, of course, reveals the state of mind of Judah toward her Eastern neighbor. She hates Edom with a deadly hatred. If Yahweh has brought Edom low, what better evidence could Judah desire of his love for herself? Does he not hate Edom even as she does? Is he not therefore Judah's friend? The treatment of Judah by Edom at the time of Judah's

great disaster furnished the ground for this spirit of revenge. Precisely the same attitude is taken in the little Book of Obadiah, where the cause is explicitly stated (Obad. 10 ff.), and a soul-satisfying revenge is assured to Judah (vss. 15–18). In Isaiah, chapter 63, Edom is looked upon in the same way and a paean of triumph is lifted up over her anticipated overthrow. A bitterness of spirit like that cannot be kept in an air-tight compartment; it spreads over the whole personality and more or less vitiates the whole being.

But if Yahweh really loves his people, why does he permit her to suffer so long and so terribly? What a strange sort of love that is! To this Malachi rejoins that the sins of Judah have abundantly justified all the harsh treatment she has received and is still receiving. Prosperity is the reward of piety, not of wickedness. Judah has not honored Yahweh (1:6). Her priests have failed in the discharge of their duties; they have been careless and indifferent in the conduct of the ritual; and they have shown favoritism in the administration of the law (2:2–9). In addition to these ritualistic offenses, Malachi denounces with deep feeling the sin of divorce (Mal. 2:10–16). This was apparently a quite common practice then as now. Malachi emphasizes two aspects of it as radically wrong: first, the fact that Hebrew women who had been married in their youth were cast off when old and helpless and left to shift for themselves. The tears and cries of these deserted women come up before God and drown out all the appeals of sinful Judah. Second, Jewish men are marrying foreign women. It may well be that the divorces were often preparatory to such new alliances. These marriages

are an unpardonable offense in Yahweh's eyes. The blood of Judah and the religion of Yahweh should be kept pure, free from contamination with alien and corrupting influences.[1] Malachi's opposition to divorce is therefore based on two grounds; it is both religiously and ethically wrong. This is the only outspoken and clear condemnation of divorce per se in the Old Testament.[2]

The sin of Judah being so blatant, a process of purification must be gone through with before there can be any restoration of prosperity. To this end Yahweh is coming in judgment to cleanse Judah, "like a refiner's fire and fuller's soap." This purificatory work will start at the temple with the priesthood, but it will extend throughout the population and will purge away all moral wrongs. These are listed as sorcery, adultery, perjury, and oppression of the poor and weak (Mal. 3:1–6). Special emphasis is laid upon the necessity of paying the tithes (3:7–11). Yahweh can hardly be expected to pour out blessings upon his people when they are remiss and delinquent in their obligations to

[1] Malachi's denunciation of the marriage of foreign wives is treated by C. C. Torrey (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, XVII [1898], 1–15), as an attack upon the evils of apostasy from the religion of Yahweh to a foreign cult. See my commentary, *ad loc.*

[2] In early Israel divorce was the exclusive privilege of the husband and was permissible on slight provocation. The Deuteronomic law (24:1 ff.) put certain obstacles in the way in that it required a written statement (=a bill of divorcement) to be given the wife by the husband and it prohibited the remarriage of the divorced woman to the first husband in case she should have married again and been made a widow again by death or by divorce. Divorce was absolutely denied in two cases: (1) when a man had been forced to marry a virgin whom he had seduced (Deut. 22:29) and (2) when a husband had slandered his newly married wife (Deut. 22:19). These were ameliorating provisions; but the initiative in divorce always remained with the husband.

him. If they perform their moral and religious duty to the full, Yahweh will not fail to reward them abundantly.

112. *The final word of Malachi*, as of his immediate predecessors, was a promise of the dawn of the new age. It is significant of his point of view that he describes this as the rising of the "sun of righteousness with healing in its wings" (Mal. 4:2). The word "righteousness" here as in Isaiah, chapters 40–55, has the special meaning of "vindication." The content of the term is clearly indicated in the context (3:16—4:3). There is to be a day of judgment at the opening of the messianic era. The good and the bad are to receive their respective dues. The good will be granted a blessed triumph over the wicked, whose overthrow is depicted as extermination by fire and as being trampled under foot of the righteous. This is Malachi's method of justifying the ways of God to man.[1]

113. *The same two fundamental notes* appear in Isaiah, chapters 56–66.[2] These chapters come from the same period in general as Malachi, though they are probably not all from the same time or the same author. The problem treated is still the same. And the prophetic diagnosis is the same. The delay in the manifestation of Yahweh's favor and the consequent continuation of the period of suffering find justification in the sins of Judah. A dark picture is painted of contemporary

[1] The reference to the "wings" of the sun recalls the fact that the common symbol of the sun and the sun-god in Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia was a winged disk. The same symbolism apparently penetrated into Judah.

[2] On the reasons for placing these chapters in this general period, see the commentaries of O. C. Whitehouse, *Isaiah*, II (Century Bible, 1908), 225–38; J. Skinner (Cambridge Bible, 1917); G. W. Wade (Westminster Commentaries, 1911); B. Duhm (*Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*, 3d ed., 1914); K. Marti (*Kurzer Hand-commentar zum Alten Testament*, 1904).

conditions. The rulers of Judah are blind and dumb; they have no insight into the situation; they are fatuously optimistic and careless of tomorrow; they are a prey to laziness, greed, and sensuousness (Isa. 56:10–12). Nobody heeds the fact that the righteous are perishing or recognizes that they are better off dead than alive (Isa. 57:1, 2). Sorcery, harlotry, and adultery are rife; falsehood is universal; and children are being offered up as sacrificial victims (Isa. 57:3–5). Murder, theft, evil-speaking, and perjury are the order of the day (Isa. 59:3–8). There seems to be no faithful administration of justice or regard for truth; iniquity stalks abroad unrebuked (Isa. 59:9–15). And yet the very men who do these things are most scrupulous in their outer conformity to the claims of religion (Isa. 58:2 f.).

This period of moral chaos and evil is at an end. The Messianic age is at the door. Let Judah prepare itself for the coming day (Isa. 56:1). The prerequisites of the messianic kingdom are compounded of ritualistic and moral elements. Justice and righteousness are indispensable (Isa. 60:17, 18, 21; 61:8). So also is the observance of the Sabbath (Isa. 56:2; 58:13). Humility of spirit and a contrite heart insure Yahweh's abiding presence (Isa. 57:15). The pious will do away with all forms of oppression, feed the hungry, house the homeless poor, and clothe the naked. This is real religion (Isa. 58:3–10). The doing of such things will insure a glorious future.

114. *The attitude toward the non-Jewish people* is not unified. In chapter 56 there is a remarkable breadth of spirit shown, an all-inclusive charity. Even aliens and eunuchs are welcomed into the fellowship of Yah-

weh's worship and assured that they shall not be discriminated against (Isa. 56:3 ff.), while of the temple it is said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56:7).

On the other hand there is a Jewish prejudice against foreigners that rises into a bitter hatred in chapter 63. Yahweh is about to repay fury to his adversaries occupying the islands of the sea (Isa. 59:18). The nation that will not serve Israel shall utterly perish (Isa. 60:12). The nations will honor Yahweh's people and come flocking to them from every quarter, ready to minister unto their needs in every way. The children of Judah's oppressors will come cringing before the Jews (Isa. 60:14–16); and strangers will cultivate their fields and herd their flocks (Isa. 61:5). The future Israel, after all the wicked and apostate element has been purged out of her (Isa. 65:8–12), is to be crowned with every blessing. These rewards are of a very tangible sort. They include abundance of food and drink, joy of heart, long life, permanent possession of their habitation, and universal peace extending even to the animal world (Isa. 65:14–25). The wealth of the world shall flow into the lap of Judah (Isa. 66:12). Piety brings prosperity with a vengeance. The spiritual and the material worlds are closely interrelated and the ethical and ritual aspects of religion are equally important (Isa. 56:2). We are still on Ezekiel's platform.

115. *Zechariah, chapters 9–14*, marks no advance in ethical theory or practice.[1] It perpetuates the bitter spirit

[1] For the date of these chapters, see H. G. Mitchell (*International Critical Commentary*, 1912); K. Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton* (1904); W. Nowack, *Die kleine Propheten* (3d ed., 1922).

of the past toward foreigners. It comforts Judah by promising her vengeance upon Tyre, Sidon, Syria, and Philistia (Zech. 9:1–8). All her enemies are to be overthrown by Yahweh (Zech. 12:1–9). The nations that survive will come up to Jerusalem on pilgrimage to worship and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If they should fail to come, the heavens would withhold rain from their fields, except that in Egypt, which has no rain, a failure of the Nile will bring about the punitive famine (Zech. 14:16–19). There is not a trace of the generous spirit of Deutero-Isaiah and Isaiah, chapter 56.

116. *Nehemiah's reform.*—At this point we may well consider the moral element in Nehemiah's reform movement. This movement is described in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These books as they stand are the work of the Chronicler, the same editorial hand that gave us the Books of Chronicles. But the nature of the original reform spirit is fairly obvious, notwithstanding the Chronicler's handling of the narrative.[1] Nehemiah was a pious Jew who held the high office of the king's cupbearer at the Persian court (Neh. 1:11). His soul was troubled by the tidings that came to him from Judah of the bad state of affairs existing there. Therefore, he obtained leave of absence from the king and went to Jerusalem in person to see what could be done. He found the walls of the city still lying in ruins, though nearly a century had passed since Cyrus had issued

[1] For the discussion of the literary problem of Ezra and Nehemiah, see the standard Introductions by Driver, Gray, Cornill, Bewer, and Steuernagel, and the commentaries of L. W. Batten ("International Critical Series," 1913); A. Bertholet, *Die Bücher Esra und Nehemiah* (1902); C. C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (1910); T. Witton Davies (Century Bible, 1914); H. E. Ryle (Cambridge Bible, 1893).

his decree permitting the exiles to return home if they would. Not only so but the city population was pitiably reduced and the Jews were currying favor with their neighbors from Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Samaria, and Arabian tribes to the detriment of their own spiritual welfare. Nehemiah set himself at once to the task of organizing the population for the work of rebuilding the city walls, a task which he finally completed in the face of all sorts of difficulties and opposition. Then it became necessary to provide an adequate population for the occupation and defense of the city; and this was accomplished by drafting members of the rural population for this service (Neh. 11:1, 2). A further step in this reconstruction program was the prohibition of marriages between the Jewish population and its various neighbors (Neh. 10:30; 13:23–27). This was of course a very radical step, giving rise to much bitterness of spirit, especially as it involved the breaking-up of families already constituted upon an interclan basis. But the spirit that lay behind the reform was indomitable. It insisted upon a pure-blooded Jewry and it was equally strenuous upon the necessity of a pure Yahweh cultus. In this program, the narrow, particularistic, exclusive attitude was fastened upon Judaism; and all approach to a sympathetic appreciation of the good in non-Jewish systems and peoples was cut off. The Jew became officially narrow minded.

117. *Wrongs righted.*—While this program of activities was being carried through by Nehemiah, certain wrongs were being righted. In Neh. 5:1–13, we read that the common people engaged in the work of reconstruction made loud protest against their treatment

by the rich. The lands of the poor and even their persons were being seized for debts overdue, the failure to pay being in part, at least, due to the fact that the debtors were engaged in work for the public welfare and so were neglecting their own interests. Nehemiah was able to prevail upon the rich to forego their rights in view of the circumstances. Still further, the regular remission of debts in the seventh year was re-established and all trading upon the Sabbath was prohibited (Neh. 10:31; 13:19–22).

118. *Nehemiah's personal conduct* during this period of reconstruction, the first stage of which extended over twelve years, was of a most public-spirited kind. He devoted himself with unremitting zeal to the public good. He spared neither time, labor, nor money. He puts on record the fact that he refrained from using the public funds that were at his lawful disposal as governor for the upkeep of his establishment, because of his desire to lighten the burdens of taxation upon the public as much as possible. Therefore, he spent his own money and that freely, keeping a hospitable table at which a large number of people were fed freely (Neh. 5:14–19). It is interesting to note that Nehemiah expected all of his generosity and good works to be counted to his credit upon God's ledger. Every now and again he inserts a brief prayer to God that none of this merit may be overlooked (Neh. 5:19; 6:14; 13:22, 29, 31). He firmly believes that piety deserves prosperity and he keeps careful account of his deserts.

119. *The tale of Ruth.*—The anti-foreign, narrow, exclusive spirit seen in Isaiah, chapter 63, in Zechariah, chapters 9–14, and coming to its own in the positive program of Nehemiah, did not achieve its victory

without protest. The broad, generous spirit of Isaiah, chapters 40–55, was not a lone voice crying in the wilderness. There were spiritual successors and heirs of this great soul. Two of these are represented in the Books of Ruth and Jonah. These books are most easily accounted for as campaign documents put forth in an effort to check the progress of the particularistic and intolerant spirit that won out in Nehemiah's reform. In any case, they reveal an attitude of universality that is in striking contrast to the prevailing spirit of the fifth century B.C. In the story of Ruth,[1] the universalistic point of view appears clearly and in a prominent way. Ruth, the heroine, is a Moabitish woman and that fact is not allowed to escape notice (Ruth 1:4, 22; 2:2, 6, 11, 21; 4:5, 10). Her attitude toward her Jewish widowed mother-in-law, Naomi, is from a Jewish point of view simply ideal. She steadfastly refuses to forsake her and identifies herself with her even to the extent of adopting her God (Ruth 1:16, 17). Not only so but she is diligent in looking after her own and her mother-in-law's material welfare, and to that end goes out to glean in the harvest fields (Ruth 2:2 ff.). She follows Naomi's admonitions faithfully in every particular and wins for her husband the rich land-owner Boaz. To this union was born a boy who became the grandfather of David (Ruth 4:17). Thus Ruth, the Moabitess, was ancestress of the great king; and yet the Jews would prohibit and penalize such marriages!

[1] The best commentaries on Ruth are: G. A. Cooke (Cambridge Bible, 1913); K. Budde (*Kurzer Hand-commentar zum Alten Testament*, 1897); and W. Nowack (*Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*, 1900). See also the standard Introductions of Driver, Gray, Cornill, Bewer, and Steuernagel.

120. *The Book of Jonah*[1] is even more outspoken in support of an attitude of broad sympathy and all-embracing love for all peoples. It would not exclude even the most abhorred of Israel's foes from the circle of influence of God's mercy. The story centers around the name of a prophet who lived in the eighth century B.C. and prophesied good things for the army of Jeroboam II (II Kings 14:25). This prophet is here represented as having heard the voice of God bidding him to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and preach what God shall direct him to say. Upon the receipt of this mission Jonah straightway turned his back upon Nineveh, went aboard a ship at Joppa, paid his fare, lay down in a remote recess and fell asleep through sheer exhaustion, probably due to the haste of his flight from duty. Thereupon Yahweh sent a violent storm upon the sea so that the ship was like to sink. The sailors first of all, panic-stricken, pray to their various gods; then they set themselves to lightening the ship; but to no avail, and the storm increases in fury. Hereupon the captain discovers the sleeping Jonah, arouses him, and urges him to pray to his God. Jonah tells why this terrible storm has arisen and bids the crew to throw him overboard that the sea may become calm. This is the only bit of generosity attributed to Jonah throughout the tale. The alien sailors are not willing to sacrifice even a Jew in this way, and they strive strenuously to bring the ship back to land, but without success. Then they take Jonah at his word and hurl him into the sea, with many misgivings,

[1] The best commentaries on Jonah are: J. A. Bewer (*International Critical Commentary*, 1912); George Adam Smith (Expositor's Bible, 1898); W. Nowack (*Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*, 3d ed., 1922); K. Marti (*Kurzer Hand-commentar zum Alten Testament*, 1904).

and the sea at once ceases its violence. This scene ends with the pagan sailors acknowledging the power of the Hebrew God, offering sacrifices, and making vows to Yahweh to be paid when they get ashore. So these foreigners appear in much better light than the Hebrew Jonah thus far (Jonah 1:1–16).

Meantime Jonah has been swallowed by a huge fish,[1] which Yahweh had prepared and brought ready to the spot. In the interior of this fish Jonah comes to his senses, and prays to Yahweh. Thereupon, the fish takes him ashore, where he is once more bidden to go and preach to Nineveh. This time he obeys and travels to that city, where he goes up and down the streets proclaiming the destruction of the city within forty days. The entire city betakes itself to mourning and fasting, from the king upon his throne to the very animals in the streets, all alike being clothed in sackcloth. This is an expression of their repentant desire to placate Yahweh and escape his just wrath. The second scene thus closes with the heathen city turning from the error of its ways and seeking the true God, the God of Israel. (Jonah 2:1—3:9).

The cry of the city was heeded by God and he refrained from carrying out his fell purpose. But Jonah was exceedingly angry at this turn of affairs and upbraided Yahweh, saying that he had suspected this from the start and therefore had been unwilling to undertake the mission. What is life worth to a discredited prophet?

[1] The Hebrew says nothing about a whale; it is rather "a great fish," made by Yahweh for the especial purpose of housing Jonah and transporting him to land. The size of a whale's throat is therefore not an element that needs to be considered from any point of view.

Jonah then went out of the city and sat himself down sullenly to see what Yahweh might yet do to the city. But the terrific heat of the tropical sun beat down upon his head, and so the good God prepared a gourd which came up over night and furnished grateful shade and protection. But no sooner did Jonah begin to enjoy the relief thus provided than God prepared a worm which killed the gourd. To make matters worse, God prepared a sultry sirocco-like east wind, which, together with the blazing sun, made life intolerable. To Jonah's protest and lament, Yahweh replied:

> Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou has not laboured, neither didst thou make it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I have pity upon Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand,[1] and also much cattle [Jonah 3:10–4:11]?

There is no possible answer but an affirmative to such a question, from any broad human point of view. It boldly challenges one to deny that the heart of God is at least as merciful and tender as that of a normal man. Will the good God treat his children with less consideration than an earthly father? It puts all human beings alike upon the same level as objects of the divine care. It refuses to discriminate against any people in an inhuman way. The story is an allegory with a very direct bearing upon the problems of the latter part of the fifth century in Judah. Jonah represents the narrow-minded, nationalistic Israel that prior to the Exile had failed in performing its God-given function in the

[1] These are, of course, very young infants.

world. Then they were thrown into captivity and exile until they came to some realization of their shortcomings in the sight of Yahweh. They had been given another chance after the Exile to make the riches of Yahweh's grace known to humanity at large. But they had done this, if at all, in a reluctant and half-hearted, indeed a sullen spirit. Now when they ought to be acting as missionaries to the whole world, they are putting up barriers between themselves and that world and striving to exclude the latter from all contact with Jewry and knowledge of the ways of the true God. The book is a plea for a wide-open Jewry, for a breadth of spirit which shall recognize all men as children of God. It is a protest against the exclusive and partisan spirit which temporarily prevailed. It is a worthy successor to and heir of the spirit of the great unknown prophet of the Exile.

CHAPTER X

THE MORALS OF THE EGYPTIAN JEWS

121. *The Assouan papyri.*—In the years 1904 to 1907, the interest of the world of biblical scholarship was kept agog by news of discoveries of Aramaic papyri on the island of Elephantiné in the River Nile. This island lies just opposite the town of Assuan which is on the east bank of the river. The island and town are set right at the foot of the First Cataract. The distance by rail from Alexandria to Assuan is 680 miles. At this frontier port of the Persian Empire there was stationed the Jewish garrison whose members wrote these Aramaic documents and left them for our learning.[1] These Jews had been there probably since the seventh century B.C., for the letters inform us that when Cambyses invaded Egypt in 525 B.C. he had left the Jewish temple in Assuan unharmed. But a temple as elaborate as the one at Assuan would not have been erected at once by a new colony; it presupposes the possession of considerable wealth and an assured feeling of continuity of residence in the community.

These Aramaic documents are of inestimable value for historical purposes. They are contemporary writings

[1] These papyri have been published by various scholars: e.g., A. H. Sayce and A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri Discovered at Assuan* (1906); A. Ungnad, *Aramäische Papyrus aus Elephantiné* (1911). The standard text is that of Eduard Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militar-Kolonie zu Elephantine* (1911). The best English translation is by Martin Sprengling, in the *American Journal of Theology*, XXI (1917), 411 ff.; XXII (1918), 34 ff. The citations of the papyri in this chapter follow the numbering given them in Dr. Sprengling's rendering. For those not yet translated by Sprengling, the numbers of Sachau's publication are employed.

by Jews of the fifth century B.C. They are furthermore representatives of the most trustworthy type of document in that they are in large part private letters and business contracts. They are therefore writings that are uncolored by any motive external to their main purpose and they have escaped all processes of editing at later hands which would have deprived us of much of their real value. They represent the actual practice and thought of the Jews of the fifth century B.C. We deal in them with actual facts of the experience of that period and not with theories of later minds about that period. They give us the point of view of the common folk of the period and an insight into the social and economic world of that day as they themselves saw it. In this connection, we must not forget that these colonists were mercenaries in the Persian army. They were professional, hired soldiers. They were not prophets, poets or priests; they were members of the masses. The rank and file of a professional army does not represent the highest ideals, nor the practice of perfection. But common folk as they were, they were profoundly religious and spared no pains nor cost in the pursuit of their religious rights and the support of their temple with its ordinances.

122. *The Old Testament an incomplete record.*—The papyri make clear what was already evident to the student, viz., that the Old Testament does not aim to be a complete record of the life of Israel. It is but a fragment of the literary product of that life. Even its codes of law are not complete; they leave whole areas of life's activities unprovided with regulations. There was a large amount of law and ritual that lay outside of the

codes as they appear in the Old Testament. The Old Testament legislation is to a great extent theoretical and idealistic. These letters and contracts from Assuan show us life and conduct as it actually was. If we could have this kind of a supplementary literature to the entire Old Testament, furnishing us with concrete illustrative material for the entire period covered by the Old Testament, it would cause the rewriting of all our histories of Hebrew life and thought.

123. *Babylonian influence.*—These papyri show the perpetuation and persistence of Babylonian influence upon Hebrew and Persian life in the fifth century B.C. Business and commerce are carried on according to Babylonian methods. Every transaction is recorded upon a contract and filed away for future reference. Into this contract are written all the details of the transaction with great care and the whole matter is attested by the signatures of witnesses. This kind of procedure was in the interests of justice. It militated against false claims and deliberate misinterpretation of terms. Everything was put plainly in writing. It shows a recognition of the necessity of truthfulness and honest dealing in business affairs. True it is also an evidence that dishonesty and lying were a common enough thing to have made this means of self-protection necessary in the commercial world. It is also a safeguard against the misunderstandings due to fallible memories.

124. *A typical contract* is here given, providing for the ownership and use of what appears to have been a wall between two houses:[1]

[1] This translation is essentially that of my colleague, Dr. Martin Sprengling, as given in *American Journal of Theology*, XXII (1918), 371–75.

On the 18th of Elul, that is the 28th day of Pachons,[1] the 15th year of Xerxes the king,[2] Qoniah, the son of Zadok, an Aramaean of Assuan, belonging to the colors of Warizath, spoke to Mahseiah, the son of Jedoniah, an Aramaean of Assuan, belonging to the colors of Warizath, as follows: I came to thee and thou didst give me the gateway of thy house to build one buttress-wall [?] there. That buttress-wall [?] which is attached to my house at its corner which is toward the south shall be thine. That buttress-wall [?] shall adjoin the side of my house from the ground upwards, from the corner of my house which is toward the south as far as the house of Zechariah. Neither tomorrow nor any later day shall I have power to restrain thee from building upon [*or* above] this thy buttress-wall [?]. If I should restrain thee, I will pay thee the sum of ten shekels by the King's weights, pure silver, and that buttress-wall [?] shall be thine nevertheless. And if Qoniah should die, neither tomorrow nor on any later day shall son or daughter, brother or sister, near or distant relative, trooper or civilian, have power to restrain Mahseiah or any descendant of his from building upon [*or* above] that buttress-wall [?] of his. Whoever shall restrain any one of them shall pay to him the sum which is written above, and the buttress-wall [?] shall be thine nevertheless, and thou shalt have full power to build upon [*or* above] it upwards, and I Qoniah shall not have the right to say to Mahseiah as follows: That gateway is not thine and thou shall not go forth [by it] into the street which is between us and the house of Pftu-neit, the sailor. If I should restrain thee, I will pay thee the sum which is written above, and thou shalt have full power to open that gateway and to go forth [by it] into the street which is between us.

Pelatiah the son of Ahio has written this deed at the dictation of Qoniah. The witnesses thereto:

witness Mahseiah, the son of Isaiah;
witness, Satibarzanes, the son of ———;
witness, Shemaiah, the son of Hosea;
witness, Pharataphernes, the son of Artaphernes;

[1] The date is given first according to the Hebrew calendar and then by the Persian calendar; it represents Sept. 12th.

[2] I.e., 471 B.C.

witness, Baga-data, the son of Nabu-Kudurri; Nabu-li, the son of Drgmn; witness, Bubis, the son of Rehemre; witness, Shalom, the son of Hoshaiah.

This document shows almost as much meticulous care and attention to the possibilities that may arise as does a modern legal instrument.

125. *Attitude toward non-Jews.*—Turning to the direct and positive statements of the papyri themselves, containing as they do the personal testimony of real Jews, let us begin by observing their relations with non-Jews. It will at once appear that under the circumstances conditioning their existence the exclusive nationalistic attitude of the triumphant party in Jerusalem was impracticable in Elephantiné and Assuan. The colonists were in the pay of the Persian government and subject at every turn to its orders. Their contact with the non-Jewish community was constant and continuous. They conducted business with Persians and Egyptians freely and without repugnance. Nor did the exchange of goods end the communication between the Jews and the non-Jews. The two groups gave informal hostages each to the other for good behavior, in that intermarriage of Jews and non-Jews was more or less practiced. The variation between the names of children and their fathers is best accounted for in this way.[1] There is at least one case in which a Jew has a wife with a non-Jewish name.[2]

[1] E.g., in Papyrus 1, lines 3 and 22, the Jewish Hananiah has a son with the name Esp. . . . ., which can hardly be the beginning of a Jewish name; in 15, line 19, appears Hada-Nuri; in 15, line 105, Megaphernes; in 18, line 5, Hanan son of Pa-Khnum; and the names as a whole in 18 are a mixture of Jewish and Egyptian.

[2] In Papyrus 13, line 3. Hosea the Jew has a wife called "'Srsut," which is clearly non-Jewish.

There is one foreigner whom they hate to the uttermost, viz., Widarnag, who as a former military governor of Assuan had complied with the request of the priests of the Egyptian god Khnum and had totally destroyed the Jewish temple in Assuan. This shows a bitter hostility between the Jews and the Egyptian priests, which was quite natural, almost inevitable, in view of the racial and religious differences between the two groups. But Widarnag is the chief offender and is spoken of in no uncertain terms:

In the month of Tammuz, the 14th year of Darius the king,[1] when Arsham had departed and gone with the King, the shavelings of the god Khnum who are in Yeb the fortress,[2] made a plot with Widarnag, who was military governor here, to wit: Let the temple of Yahu the god which is in Yeb, the fortress, be removed thence. Then that Widarnag, the accursed [?], sent a letter unto Napayan, his son, who was commander at Assuan the fortress, as follows: The Temple which is in Yeb the fortress shall be destroyed. Thereupon Napayan led forth the Egyptians and other troops; they came to the fortress of Yeb with their implements; they entered into that temple; they razed it to the ground. . . . .

But when this had happened we with our wives and children put on sackcloth and fasted and prayed to Yahu, the lord of heaven: Show us that cur Widarnag with his anklets wrenched from his feet and bereft of all his possessions, and all the men who sought evil against that temple slain, so that we may look upon their[3] [dead bodies].

This reminds us of the vindictiveness of the Imprecatory Psalms; but the provocation was exceedingly great.

126. *Bribery and deceit.*—As the subjects and employees of a foreign master, it may be taken for

[1] That is in June-July, 410 B.C.

[2] This is the name of Elephantine in the papyri.

[3] From the translation of Dr. Martin Sprengling in *American Journal of Theology*, XXI (1917), 437 f.

granted that there would be occasion for resort to bribery and sycophancy for the attainment of coveted ends; and there is clear evidence that this sort of thing was actually done. In the letter sent by the priests of the Assuan temple to Bagoas, the governor, from which the passage quoted above was taken, Bagoas is not only assured that if he will use his influence with the Egyptian officials to bring about the restoration of the temple he shall receive merit in the presence of Yahu greater in amount "than that of the man who offers burnt-offerings and sacrifices of more than 1000 talents in value," but it is also intimated that a substantial *quid pro quo* will be likewise forthcoming.[1] In Papyrus 11, we read that as the Egyptians had given a bribe the Jews likewise had had to resort to counter bribery. In Papyrus 12, we are informed that the Jews gave to some official 1000 measures of barley for the restoration of their temple worship. A necessary resort to such underground methods for obtaining even perfectly proper ends besets the whole moral life of a community with peril.

127. *Women* seem on the whole to have had more liberty of action than the legislation considered thus far would allow. In part, at least, they had the same civil rights as men. They could subscribe in their own names to the support of the local temple of Yahu, as appears from the names in the subscription list given in Papyrus 15. They could make gifts of money in their own right.[2]

[1] See Papyrus 8, line 28, which reads, "and as for the gold, concerning this we have sent information"; that is, of course, in some more private way.

[2] Sachau, No. 35. Numbers preceded by "Sachau" are from Sachau's standard edition cited on p. 207.

They could even borrow money in their own names giving such security as was satisfactory. In one case this security was in the shape of a mortgage upon real estate owned by the debtor.[1] They could buy, sell, and mortgage real estate freely.[2] Marriage was arranged by the father of the bride;[3] but the dowry was paid by the husband to the bride.[4]

One of the most startling revelations of these papyri is the fact that Yahu, their God, was provided with a female consort. Two subordinate deities are mentioned in such a way as to leave no doubt of their relationship. In a list of gifts to the local temple made apparently in 419 B.C. and bearing the heading: "These are the names of the Jewish army who gave money for Yahu the god, man for man, the sum of two shekels," there appears this summary:

> Therein to Yahu, 12 Keresh, 6 shekels.
> To Ashimath-Bethel, 7 Keresh,
> To Anath-Bethel, 12 Keresh.

The second name is not certainly a feminine proper name; it may equally well be masculine. But the third is unquestionably feminine. We find the same goddess referred to again as "Anath-Yahu" in another papyrus.[5] Thus Yahu, whom the Old Testament knows as Yahweh, is brought into immediate association not only with subordinate deities, but with a female deity.[6] This

[1] Sachau, No. 30.

[2] Sachau, Nos. 31 and 32.

[3] Sachau, No. 39. [4] Sachau, No. 37. [5] Sachau, No. 32 (?).

[6] A similar composite deity is known to have been worshiped in early Moab under the name "Ashtar-Chemosh"; see Moabite stone, line 17, as published by Bennett, *The Moabite Stone* (1911), pp. 31–51 f. The Phoenicians also worshiped a composite male and female deity, named Atargatis.

speaks volumes as to the character of the Yahu-worship in Assuan. Not only so, but it makes us take more seriously the reference to sensuous rites at the temple in Jerusalem (II Kings 23:7) and the protest of the women, in Jeremiah, chapter 52, against being forbidden to worship the Queen of heaven as their predecessors had done. The presence of the sex-element in religion has always and everywhere proved contaminating. This revelation from Assuan leads us to take more literally what the earlier prophets had had to say about adultery and harlotry. To a greater extent than has been generally supposed, this language has to be taken literally, instead of figuratively, as has hitherto been the case. On the other hand, the attribution of deity, though of an inferior degree, to a female, would to some extent at least put the conception of womanhood upon a somewhat higher scale.

128. *The attitude of the colony toward justice* and its ways of conserving the interests of justice are well illustrated in these papyri. Attention has already been called to the stress laid upon the careful preparation of written records of all important transactions of a business character and the care taken to put witnesses of the bargain on record. Further, after a contract was made, it was a legal offense punishable by heavy fines for anyone to dispute the rights therein established. Two sisters exchange a plot of land that has been awarded to them by the king's judge and by the commander of the army for some real estate held by a third woman. If anybody disputes the right to the plot they have handed over he shall pay seven *kerĕs* damages.[1] Similarly when

[1] Sachau, No. 31; similarly also in Sachau, No. 32 recording the purchase of property by a woman.

one person makes a gift to another the matter is recorded and the giver binds himself under penalty never to ask the return of the gift. A woman presenting some money to her sister guarantees the sister perpetual possession of the gift and agrees to pay two *kerĕs* to the sister if she ever asks the return of the gift.[1] A man and woman bind themselves in similar fashion never to ask back a gift made to others in a spirit of love.[2] Such measures did not, however, put a stop to suits for the recovery of property alleged to be wrongfully held. One papyrus seems to be the record of such a claim, in that a man impugns another's right to the possession of a she-ass.[3] It is significant of the force of the God-idea in practical life that in several cases an oath before God is accepted as settling a question at issue in a legal dispute.[4] The fear of punishment at the hands of an outraged deity was evidently strong enough to keep men from false swearing. One man charges another with having broken into his home and stolen money, doing violence to his wife in the process, and he cites him before the tribunal of God and makes him take an oath of purgation in the presence of four witnesses. A refusal to do so would of course be treated as a confession of guilt. In another case a contract for the purchase of fish is made binding by an oath before God. Yet in one case a simple IOU, or promise to pay, is accepted as satisfactory. A husband promised to pay his wife by a certain date the balance due her on a pre-nuptial marriage contract.[5]

[1] Sachau, No. 35. [2] Sachau, No. 36; similarly in Sachau, No. 38.

[3] Sachau, No. 33.

[4] See Sachau, Nos. 27, 28, 34; and Sayce-Cowley, B 4, F 5.

[5] No. 14.

The fact that this transaction fell within the limits of the family probably made a great difference.

One document seems to contain fragments of an appeal from the decision of a judge or a court to some higher authority.[1] Whether this authority is the Persian Satrap or some group of officials or judges is not clear, owing to the fragmentary state of the papyrus. The royal authority was invoked to settle the troublesome matter of square dealing with weights and measures. There was a royal standard which determined all such questions. In one document, a woman named Mibtahyah puts on record that out of love she has given to her sister silver amounting to six pounds according to the king's weights.[2]

129. *Interest on loans.*—The record of a loan to a woman from a fellow-Jew is of considerable significance. It shows that Jews charged interest upon loans to fellow-Jews notwithstanding the law against such procedure (see p. 137), and that every precaution was taken to insure the payment of both principal and interest, in that a mortgage was taken upon the entire property of the debtor, personal and real, and the debtor's heirs were held responsible for the debt if not paid before the death of the original debtor. The body of the contract reads as follows:

Thou hast given me as a loan four shekels of silver, i.e., four according to the weights of the king. I will pay thee interest thereon at the rate of two hallur per shekel per month, i.e., at the rate of eight hallur per month. If the interest is added to the capital[3] I will pay thee interest upon this interest even as upon

[1] No. 6.

[2] Sachau, No. 35; so also in Sachau, No. 30.

[3] I.e., if I fail to pay interest when due.

the [original] capital. If the change of the year comes and I have not satisfied thy claim to thy capital and to the interest upon it according to the conditions of this document, then you O Meshullam, and your sons are justified in seizing as pledge anything which thou mayest find in my possession, a house of brick, silver and gold, bronze and iron, manservant and maidservant, barley and spelt and any sort of food which thou mayest find in my possession, until I have fully paid thee thy capital with interest. And meantime I shall have no right to say to thee, "I have satisfied thy claim to thy money and interest upon it," so long as this document is in thy hand. Nor shall I have any right to complain of thee before the magistrate and the judge by saying, "Thou hast taken away a pledge from me," so long as this document is still in thy hand. And if I die without having satisfied thy claim to thy money and the interest upon it, then my sons must pay thee in full this money and the interest upon it. If they, however, do not pay thee in full this money and the interest upon it, then thou, O Meshullam, hast the right to take to thyself any food or pledge which thou mayest find in their possession until they have paid thee in full thy capital with interest, while they will have no right to complain of thee before the magistrate and the judges, so long as this document is still in thy hands. If they, however, go to court notwithstanding, they shall not obtain a judgment so long as this document is still in thy hand.[1]

Since the relation of the hallur to the shekel is not yet definitely known, the rate of interest cannot be certainly known. The most probable calculation, reckoned upon the basis of 100 hallur to the shekel, yields a rate of interest of 2 per cent per month, or 24 per cent per annum. This is approximately the rate known to have been prevalent in the time of Jerome (*ca.* 331–420 A.D.). It is evident that the contracting parties and witnesses are not concerned about the violation of any law prohibiting the charging of interest. If they knew of such a law, they never thought of taking it seriously. And the

[1] As translated by Dr. M. Sprengling, *loc. cit.*

nature of the contract, with its detailed provision for collection of the interest and capital and its references to court procedure, shows that this kind of transaction was of common occurrence and that the holder of the mortgage had no need to worry over the possibility of his contract being annulled by the judges or arousing opposition or hostility on the part of the Jewish community.

130. *The spirit of Judaism.*—On the whole the Assuan Papyri picture a Jewish colony living on relatively friendly terms with its non-Jewish neighbors. There was no lack of devotion to the Hebrew God, Yahu, nor to the institutions of Yahu, such as temple-worship, sacrifice, and passover. But there is a notable lack of that excessively exclusive spirit represented by legalistic Judaism. Similarly woman seems to have had greater freedom of activity than was contemplated by the existing legislation. She moved about as a woman of the world having apparently most of the rights granted to men. Life as a whole seems a very real thing, carried on in its essential features much as it goes on today. There is a natural lack of exalted idealism, since that commodity does not easily blend with the business of buying and selling with which these papyri are much concerned. Yet that these Jews were capable of sacrifice in devotion to high ends is clearly evident from the grief that overwhelmed them when their temple was wantonly destroyed and the measures they took to bring about its restoration. Religion was to them something more than a luxury; it was a vital necessity; and they were ready to deny themselves much in order to be permitted to satisfy this need of the spirit.

CHAPTER XI

THE MORALS OF THE PSALMS

131. *The Psalter as a hymnbook.*—The Psalter has been fitly called "the hymn book of the second Temple."[1] This does not imply that there are no psalms from the pre-exilic period but it does mean that the bulk of the Psalter was written in the post-exilic age. Not only so, but the Psalter as such was constructed for use in the Second Temple and the Psalms were sung by the choirs and worshipers in that post-exilic sanctuary. Therefore, they must have expressed the thoughts and satisfied the needs of that period.

Hymnbooks, however, represent the thoughts and feelings of the average man. The best poetry is never found in hymnals; the limitations of space and of subject-matter are too heavy shackles upon the wings of poetic imagination to permit of the highest flights in hymnology. The best Hebrew poetry is in the Book of Job. The same handicap fetters thought. People go to worship, not to think, but to pray. A hymnbook that is too intellectual is doomed to failure. A similar situation is revealed in the field of ethics. The best ethics will be found outside of the Psalter. It is not a handbook of morals, but a hymnbook. It is on that account all the more reliable as a witness upon these matters. The data it presents are not selected to bolster up any theory or proposition, but are incidental to the main purpose of the anthology, which is prayer and praise. They reveal

[1] See the chapter under this title in my *Religion of the Psalms* (1922).

the mind and heart of the Hebrew as no formal treatise on morals could ever do. We see him in the Psalter as he really is, devoid of all pretense and pose.

132. *The "I" of the Psalmists.*—One problem at once confronts the interpreter of the Psalms and that is the determination of the significance of the pronoun "I," which is so constantly in evidence throughout the Psalter. Who is this that is continually talking about himself and his sorrows? What individual could have been significant enough to have imposed the problem of his personal welfare so persistently upon the consciousness of the people? Or, were many poets so gifted as to be able to describe their own psychological reactions in such a way as that their writings became the satisfactory expression of the hopes and longings of multitudes? These are open questions today for the most part; but in general, it may be said, the thought of scholars is inclined to regard the "I" in the majority of cases as representing the personified Jewish community. It is the nation that speaks and that is so absorbing a theme of interest to the poets and people. We must, therefore, accept the utterances of the Psalms as for the most part expressing the community's sentiments. Even where the psalm was originally the expression of an individual's experience, upon being taken up into the Temple hymn-book it came to be looked upon as expressing a generally representative state of mind.[1]

133. *The problem of suffering.*—The problem presented to the Jewish community by its continued sufferings takes up much of the psalmists' attention. The note of discouragement sounds repeatedly:

[1] See *ibid.*, pp. 21–32.

How long, O Yahweh, wilt thou forget me forever?
How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
How long must I take counsel with myself,
Having sorrow in my heart daily?
How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me
[Ps. 13:1, 2; cf. 44:9–26; 94:3–7]?

The arrogant attitude of the wicked is deplored and pictured in most vivid terms (Pss. 10:3–11; 12:3, 4; 38:19 ff.; 73:3–12). But notwithstanding all this, the pious are adjured to forego all worry and have a satisfying confidence in God (Pss. 37; 92:7, 8, 12–15). To this end, the final judgment and overthrow of the nations here upon earth is glowingly portrayed (Pss. 96:10–13; 98:8,9); and the rule of the Messiah over all nations is foretold (Ps. 2).

134. *Imprecatory Psalms.*—In this connection are found many prayers for and exultations over the coming destruction of the wicked. These are commonly known as the Imprecatory Psalms. The most bitter of them are Pss. 59, 6–15; 69; 83; 109:6–20; 137:7–9; and 149:5–9. What is to be said as to such vitriolic utterances? For those who would make the psalmists to have been paragons of virtue, saints without blemish, these psalms present insuperable difficulties. But the psalmists were after all human beings and as such subject to human reactions. Not only so, but they were Jews; and as such they had that intensity of spirit which is characteristic of the Semitic peoples. When we recall the long history of oppression and wrong through which the Hebrews had gone at the hands of Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians, the wonder is not that there is some sentiment of this violent sort in their literature, but that there is not more. If we think of Israel in terms of the experiences during the great world-war of such

countries as Belgium, France, Serbia, and Armenia, we shall not find it hard to understand and to forgive the Jewish state of mind. To understand their religious and moral problem we must remember that they estimated the value of religion by the tangible test of material prosperity. But they had been ardently religious; and yet they had experienced and were experiencing only adversity. As a matter of fact judged by any just standard, Israel was a more pious and a purer people than any of their oppressors. They were being wrongfully robbed and slaughtered and the robbers and murderers were prospering!

Still another approach to the interpretation and evaluation of these Imprecatory Psalms must be made. The passionate hatred of these psalmists for those who had oppressed Israel is but the obverse of their passion for justice. The measure of a man's enthusiasm for righteousness is often indicated by the intensity of his wrath against sin. To be lukewarm or indifferent in the presence of wrong is no mark of a true lover of justice. Still further, for the post-exilic Jews justice and piety had to be vindicated in the life that now is, for they had no conception of rewards and punishments in a life to come. If the justice of God was to be commended to men, it must manifest itself plainly here on earth. Death held nothing in store for the righteous. Death, indeed, was to be dreaded, for the existence anticipated in Sheol was empty and worthless, and by no means to be coveted (Pss. 6:5; 16:9–11; 30:3, 9; 88:10–12; 115:17, 18). One of the most highly treasured rewards of the pious was continuance of life on earth to a hale and hearty old age (Pss. 103:4, 5; 128:5,

6; 143:7). To be cut off prematurely in the prime of life is the fitting reward of the wicked (Pss. 9:17–19; 55:15, 23; 86:13; 88:5). If the wicked do enjoy good fortune for a season, it is but a transient, fleeting experience to be brought to a speedy ending.

135. *Life after death.*—There are three difficult passages in the Psalms that are open to debate as to whether or not they contain any gleam of hope regarding the life to come. The first of these is Ps. 17:13–15. This is a very bad piece of text and any translation must be tentative. The following involves some slight changes of text:

> Arise, O Yahweh, confront him, cast him down;
> Deliver me from the wicked.
> Slay them by thy sword;
> By thy hand, O Yahweh, slay them out of the world.
> May this be their portion in life.
> And may their bodies be filled with thy stored-up [penalty].
> And may their sons be sated therewith.
> And may they hand on the residue to their babes.
> But I—I shall see thy face in vindication;
> I shall be satisfied when thy form awakes.

According to this rendering, the poet anticipates seeing in this life the execution of Yahweh's judgment upon the wicked and the corresponding vindication of his own righteousness and that of Yahweh himself. This translation of the last two lines is the most natural grammatically and fits in well with Hebrew modes of thought. Yahweh is quite humanly represented very often; and it is not repugnant to the Hebrew mind that he should take a nap.[1]

[1] The more common rendering is "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy form." But this is harsher Hebrew and leaves the "awaking" very vaguely identified. Is it after death, or, figuratively, after a period of stupor?

The second ambiguous passage is Ps. 49:6–21. This is a statement of the fact that the wealth of the wicked will not avail to release him from the death that surely awaits him. All men die; there is no release from that war. But the implication clearly is that the wicked die before their time. The pious, however, are under the care of God, who does not permit death to snatch his saints away prematurely.

> Surely God will rescue me,
> From the power of Sheol he will indeed take me [Ps. 49:15].

This is an expression of the assurance that though Sheol reach forth greedy claws for its prey, God will rescue the pious from its clutch. There is no thought of life after death here any more than in verse 15 where the pious is pictured as having the rule over the wicked *in the morning*. This is not the morning of resurrection but the dawn of a new era in which the righteous shall attain their proper pre-eminence. A similar usage of the phrase is seen in Ps. 143:8, where the poet beseeches God to manifest himself in his behalf:

> Do not hide thy face from me,
> That I should be like those descending into the pit.
> Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning;
> For I have trusted in thee.
> Teach me the way that I should go;
> For unto thee have I lifted up my soul [Ps. 143:7, 8].

It is quite clear that "in the morning" here refers to a time to come in the life of the speaker upon earth.

The third passage in which the thought of life after death has been found is Ps. 73:23–28. In the preceding verses the Psalmist has expressed the thought that the wicked are suddenly swept away by the hand

of God. Then after regretting his temporary forgetfulness of this fact, the poet goes on to say:

But I am continually with thee.
Thou dost hold my right hand.
By thy counsel thou wilt guide me,
And after thee thou wilt take me by the hand.[1]
Whom have I in the heavens?
And besides thee I have no delight in the earth.
My flesh and my heart fail;
But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.
For lo, those that are far from thee will perish;
Thou wilt surely destroy all who become apostates from thee.
But as for me—the nearness of God is my good;
I have made the Lord Yahweh my refuge,
To tell of all thy works.

The thought of this passage concerns itself with the consciousness of the immediate and unfailing presence of God here in the life upon earth. The pious rejoice in and are sustained by this, while the wicked are cut off from life.

It is on the whole improbable that there is any thought of a worthful life after death in the Psalter. The function of a hymnbook, as we have already suggested, is to express the aspiration and worship of the common man. It does not come into being as an agency for the propagation of new ideas or ideals. But the thought of rewards and punishments in a future life was certainly an unfamiliar idea in the exilic and post-exilic age. Even if all the possible references to future life in the Psalms and in the other exilic and post-exilic

[1] This line is very difficult. The Hebrew text as it stands says, "And after glory thou wilt take me"; or perhaps, "And afterward gloriously thou wilt take me." The rendering given above rests upon a slight change of text.

writings really did express this hope, yet the total amount of material on the subject would be very small, showing that this thought did not play a large part in the life of early Judaism. The absence of this hope made the ethical problem very acute for a people who estimated the value of religion in terms of the tangible good derived therefrom. The surprising thing is that, lacking any hope of this sort and compelled to find the satisfactions of religion in the life that now is, the Jews clung steadfastly to their religious faith and were ready when occasion arose to die for their ideals. The ethical problem was especially acute from the point of view of the individual man. The nation perpetuates itself continually; and the rewards that fail in one generation may be anticipated for a later one, but the individual dies and "where is he?" We turn now to this individual to see what his standards were and what were his consolations and hopes.

136. *The worth of man.*—The individual, though created by God, is as nothing and less than nothing in God's sight:

> Let me know how frail I am [39:4].

And not only I, but

> Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity [39:5].

So also in 9:20; 39:11. This is the natural conclusion when man is altogether "of the earth" (10:18); how can such an one be of account in the sight of heaven? The vanity and brevity of human life are so self-evident that one of the psalmists expresses his wonder that God should give man any consideration at all:

Yahweh, what is man that thou takest knowledge of him,
Or the son of man that thou takest account of him?
Man is like unto a breath;
His days are as a shadow that passes away [144:3 f.].

These somber and depressing strains are not left, however, to ring in our memories alone. At least one of the Psalms challenges this conception of humanity with confidence. Perhaps there is deliberate expression of contrary opinion in these two psalms. In any case the phraseology of the two passages is in part identical:

What is man that thou art mindful of him,
And the son of man that thou visitest him?
For thou has made him but little lower than God,
And hast crowned him with glory and honor.
Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet.
All sheep and oxen;
Yea, and the beasts of the field,
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea;
Whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas [8:4–8].

The low estimate of man is made in view of the unapproachable majesty and excellence of God; the high valuation, on the other hand, is based on a comparison with subhuman life. The average view of the Psalms regarding human nature and its capacity is midway between these extremes. The balance inclines, indeed, toward the higher level rather than the lower, for the longing and aspirations of man savor rather of the divine than of the brute.

137. *The ways of the wicked.*—The ideal character of the psalmists is constantly brought into contrast with

its opposite type, viz., the wicked. The virtues of the pious shine by contrast with the vices and crimes of the sinner. Who are sinners? If we may accept the answer of Ps. 130:3, all men are in that class:

> If Thou shouldest keep watch of iniquities, O Yahweh,
> Who could stand?

A similar opinion of humanity crops out in Ps. 14:1–3:

> They have dealt corruptly, they have done abominably;
> There is none that doeth good.
> Yahweh looked forth from heaven upon the sons of men
> To see if there were any man of understanding that did
> seek after God;
> They are all corrupt, they are together become impure;
> There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Another psalmist, in a period of depression, utters a more specific charge against the human race:

> I said in my perturbation, "All men are liars" [116:11].

But such sentiments are by no means the general judgment of the Psalms. There is rather a very sharp discrimination between the good and the bad. Deceit and lying are especially characteristic of the wicked, and are an abomination to Yahweh.[1] False swearing, of course, falls under the ban.[2] Hypocrites are subject to the wrath of God, for they find no response in His heart to their pretenses.[3]

Ungodly people are unstable morally. They cannot be depended upon to fulfil their contracts. They say and do not do. They speak smoothly with their lips while malice is in their hearts:

[1] 5:6; 7:14; 12:2; 43:1; 101:7. [2] 24:4. [3] 28:3; 50:16–20.

> There is no sincerity in their mouth;
> Their inward part is a yawning gulf,
> Their throat is an open sepulchre;
> They make smooth their tongue [5:9].[1]

They are characterized likewise by a spirit and attitude of hauteur and arrogance. They are bursting with pride and hold the pious in contempt, not hesitating even at slander and eagerly spreading evil reports about their neighbors.[2] They are so increased and so spread themselves as that they seem to occupy every place and leave no room for the righteous.[3]

138. *The iniquity of the wicked* is represented not as a static quantity, but rather as a dynamic principle. It is ever seeking to find expression in acts of ill will toward the pious. The wicked inflict injury without provocation and basely return evil for good.[4] They lay traps to ensnare the pious and they bribe authorities to pervert just decisions.[5] Their wickedness is a disturbing force within them, causing them to travail with evil plans like a woman with child.[6] Fortunately their wickedness often recoils upon themselves. They hate the good and stop at nothing to accomplish their evil purposes against them. Their record teems with deeds of oppression and bloodshed. They watch the pious and plan their destruction. They are bloodthirsty lovers of violence.[7]

139. *The identity of the wicked.*—The intensity of the feeling and the violence of the language in these denunciations of the wicked stir our curiosity. Who are these

[1] So also 26:4; 28:3.
[2] See 1:1; 5:5; 15:3; 40:4; 101:5.
[3] See 12:1, 8; 13:2.
[4] See 7:4; 35:12; 38:20.
[5] Pss. 15:5; 26:9 f.; 31:4.
[6] Ps. 7:14.
[7] Pss. 5:6; 11:5; 17:9 f.; 18:40; 26:9; 37:12–14.

"wicked"? Are they fellow-Jews or pagans? Is the language to be taken literally? Are the foes of the pious really murderers? Do they live in the constant endeavor to do injury to their neighbors? No normal society ever existed for any length of time with any considerable proportion of its members murderously inclined toward the rest. If these charges of the psalmists are to be given any credence, we must recognize that the community of the pious was in real danger. They must have lived in perpetual and fearful trepidation, no man trusting his neighbor. There are two alternatives to this situation. On the one hand, such language is explicable on the basis of *odium theologicum*. That is to say, it may reflect a split in the Jewish community itself, one section remaining loyal to the customs and beliefs of the fathers, the other having abandoned the viewpoint of the past and committed itself to some new world-view or philosophy. The presuppositions for such an interpretation of the language are at hand in abundance from the later period to which most of the Psalms belong. Alexander's conquest of the Orient meant not only the triumph of Greek arms, but also the superimposing of Greek civilization upon the Oriental world. The Hellenization of the Orient was from that time on a progressive process. Alexandria in the heart of Egypt became a center of Greek influence. Other Greek cities sprang up all over the Oriental world and became foci for the propagation of Greek civilization. Hellenization of the Orient was on the march and, had it not been for the folly of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was not content to let well enough alone, the Jewish people themselves might have yielded as not unwilling

victims of its alluring charms. But Antiochus sought to hasten the process and to convert the Jews to the Hellenic program by force. This attempt roused the latent loyalty of the Jewish people and fanned the flame of a religious revolt which succeeded in saving Judaism from impending destruction. During this long-drawn-out struggle between the Hebraic and the Hellenic world-views, the feelings of the opposing parties became very intense. Such language and attitudes as are reflected in the Psalms, particularly in the description of and imprecations upon the wicked, might conceivably spring out of this situation. In that case the pious of the Psalter would be the faithful Jews who remained steadfastly loyal to the way of the fathers, and the wicked would of course be renegade Jews who identified themselves with the newer philosophy and civilization of Greece.[1] Family quarrels are apt to give rise to intense feeling and harsh language. When to this element is added the bitterness of religious strife, the language and tone of the Imprecatory Psalms become readily intelligible.

The second alternative to the view just stated is that the "wicked" of the Psalter were non-Jews or pagans. In that case, the enemies of the pious Jew would be represented by the Greek government, which held the Jews in subjection from the days of Alexander and his immediate successors down through the Seleucid era to the Maccabaean revolt in the second century B.C. From this point of view the two emotions combining to produce this ferocity of spirit and of language would be

[1] This interpretation is forcefully presented and defended by Friedländer, *Griechische Philosophie im Alten Testament* (1904).

loyalty to the Jewish religion, as it was undergoing more or less active persecution, and hatred of the alien oppressor.

140. *The atheism of the wicked.*—In any case, whichever of these diagnoses be correct, or if neither is satisfactory, the wicked are people who do not give God His due. They deny God:

> The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God" [14:1; 53:1].

The "fool" in question is not so much a man lacking in intellectual keenness; he is rather one who fails to appreciate the moral and spiritual interests in life. Nor is it the thought of the psalmists that these deniers of God are theoretical atheists. They are rather thinking of them as men whose practical conduct implies that "there is no fear of God before their eyes" (36:1). This is clear from a comparison of 10:4 with 10:3, 11, 13. In 10:3:

> The wicked boasts of his heart's desire,
> And the covetous vaunteth himself, though he contemn Yahweh.

If Yahweh is contemned, He nevertheless exists; contempt is not poured out upon a non-existent person. Similarly in 10:13:

> He [the wicked] has said in his heart, "God has forgotten;
> "He [God] hides His face, He will never see."

Here again the wicked takes the existence of God for granted; but he does not reckon with Him as a potent influence upon the affairs of men. Consequently the same conception is inherent in 10:4:

> The wicked in the pride of his countenance says, "He [God] will not require";
> All his thoughts are: "There is no God."

It is a practical atheism that is here described. There are men who dismiss the thought of God from all their purposes and plans. "They call not upon God" (53:4). He is for them a negligible quantity. And yet, in all probability they would indignantly resent the charge of atheism. Indeed, some of them are too ready to accept the theory of the divine government of the universe, for they are not satisfied with the worship of Yahweh alone, but supplement it by the practice of pagan cults in honor of other gods (16:4). Such apostates from the true religion are in the writer's mind in 40:4:

> Happy is the man that has made Yahweh his trust,
> And has not turned away to the arrogant nor to such as
> fall away treacherously.

The psalmists' estimate of these pagan gods is clearly reflected in 31:6:

> I hate them that regard lying vanities;
> But I trust in Yahweh.

If these idolators are fellow-Jews, as is probably true, at least in some cases, it is significant of the length and intensity of the struggle for a monotheistic worship in Israel. Indeed, we know that as late as the fifth century B.C. the Jewish military colony at Assuan in Egypt, enthusiastic Yahweh-worshipers though they were, yet frankly recognized other gods than Yahweh and worshiped them alongside of, and in association with, him. The monotheistic view was never uncontested in Israel; it was always in need of ardent and intelligent defense. And such defense was not lacking at the hands of prophets and psalmists.

141. *The character of the pious.*—Turning from this dark picture of the wicked man, we find the pious

presented to us in shining contrast. Yet it is no ideal man that the Psalms portray, but a man torn by hopes and fears and rent by passions such as are common to man. In contrast with the arrogance and pride of the ungodly, the pious thinks of himself and his people as poor and weak.[1] He walks in the *fear* of God.[2] He craves the mercy of God and dreads the outpouring of His wrath.[3] He is overwhelmed at times with discouragement and doubt.[4] He is in continual sorrow and at times gives way to tears and groans.[5] He even indulges himself in envy as he beholds the prosperity of the wicked.[6] He is depressed as he sees the success of iniquity and he concludes that "the faithful fail from among the sons of men" (12:1). He recognizes that the pious are in constant need of divine guidance and that it is given to them when they comply with the requirements of God;[7] the meek and God-fearing man indeed is admitted into the very secret intimacy of God. But man is by nature sinful and needs the forgiveness of God.[8] His conception of divine cleansing and pardon anticipates the Christian teaching of the necessity of regeneration. All this is incomparably expressed in Psalm 51, the classic utterance of the sense of sin and the longing for pardon:

> Be gracious unto me, O God, in accordance with Thy loving-kindness;
> In accordance with the multitude of Thy mercies wipe out my transgressions.
> Wash me thoroughly from my guilt,

[1] E.g., 9:12, 18; 10:12, 17.
[2] E.g., 5:7; 33:18; 34:9; cf. 25:9, 14.
[3] E.g., 4:1; 6:2.
[4] E.g., 22:6; 74:1 ff.; 77:7 ff.
[5] E.g., 13:2; 6:6, 7.
[6] E.g., 73:3 ff.
[7] E.g., 25:4, 9, 12, 14.
[8] E.g., 25:7, 11; 66:18.

And cleanse me from my sin.
For my transgressions I know,
And my sin is ever before me.
Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned,
And what is evil in Thine eyes I have done;
That Thou mayest be right when Thou speakest,
And pure when Thou judgest.
Verily I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin did my mother conceive me.
Verily Thou desirest faithfulness in the hidden parts;
In the secret parts, then, teach me wisdom.
Purge me with hyssop that I may be clean,
Wash me that I may be whiter than snow.
Do Thou let me hear joy and gladness;
Let the bones which Thou has broken rejoice.

Hide Thy face from my sins,
And wipe out all my iniquities.
Create for me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence,
And take not Thy holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation,
And let a willing spirit sustain me.
I would teach transgressors Thy ways,
And sinners would return unto Thee.
Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, God of my salvation,
That my tongue may sing aloud Thy righteousness.
O Lord, open Thou my lips,
That my mouth may declare Thy praise.
For Thou desirest not sacrifice;
And would I give burnt-offering, Thou hast no pleasure.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

We may not suppose that the pious were continually in the frame of mind represented by Psalm 51, nor indeed that all of them were ever in that attitude. This is

rather a mood that characterizes the most spiritually minded only, and that too only occasionally. Such sentiments crystallizing into a permanent attitude of life would be fatal to healthy, normal activities. That the state of mind of such passages as Psalm 51 was only sporadic and temporary, is shown by statements of quite a contrary sort in other psalms. One psalmist confidently declares that he has kept the ways of Yahweh and cites his good fortune in support of his claim:

> For I have kept the ways of Yahweh,
> And have not wickedly departed from my God.
> For all His ordinances were before me,
> And I put not away His statutes from me.
> And I was perfect with him,
> And I kept myself from mine iniquity.
> Therefore has Yahweh recompensed me according to my righteousness,
> According to the cleanness of my hands before His eyes [18:21–24; cf. 26:1–6, 11].

Another covets the scrutinizing eye of Yahweh to ferret out any hidden defects in his character:

> Search me, O God, and know my heart,
> Try me and know my thoughts;
> And see if there be any harmful way in me;
> And lead me in the way everlasting [139:23 f.].

Still another in contrast with this last shrinks from the eye of Yahweh, knowing himself after all to be nought but man:

> Enter not into judgment with Thy servant,
> For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified [143:2].

From this point of view the constant help of God is necessary that the speech and thought of the pious may be kept pleasing unto Yahweh:

Who can discern errors?
Clear Thou me from hidden faults.
Restrain Thy servant also from arrogant men,
Let them not rule over me.
Then shall I be perfect,
And I shall be innocent of great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart
Be acceptable in Thy sight, O Yahweh, my rock and my redeemer [19:12–14].

The pious is the favorite of God, enjoys His protection, delights in His law, is grateful for His bounty, and lives to praise Him.[1] He delights in the temple and its services; he loves companionship with his fellow-saints; and identifies the interests of the pious with the interests of God.[2] He prides himself upon his uprightness of heart and his righteousness.[3]

His further virtues include generosity to the poor, of whose necessity he does not take advantage by exacting interest; on the contrary he deals graciously with them and lends freely.[4] He was even capable of brotherly kindness to those who rewarded him by hostility.[5] He claims the merit of meekness,[6] though his bitter hatred of his foes seems to spring from a contrary state of mind.[7] He rejoices whole-heartedly when he sees dire disaster befall his enemies.[8] He is conscious of his own incorruptible integrity and, though appreci-

[1] E.g., 1:2; 13:6; 18:20; 40:8; 4:3, 7, 8; 9:14; 24:6 ff.; 74:12.
[2] E.g., 16:3; 26:4, 5; 69:9; 35:1.
[3] E.g., 24:3–6; 25:21; 73:1; 7:9; 11:7; 18:20; 43:1, 2.
[4] E.g., 41:1–3; 37:25 f.; 112:5. [5] E.g., 35:13, 14. [6] E.g., 25:9.
[7] E.g., 7:6 ff.; 18:40; 21; 28:3 ff.; 35:4 ff.; 40:13–15; 41:7 ff.
[8] E.g., 35:9; 54:7; 55:16 ff.

ative of wealth, knows that it cannot preserve anyone from death.[1] Long life, on the contrary, is assured to those whose speech is pure, who love peace, and who live the good life.[2] An attractive sketch of the pious character is presented in Psalm 15:

O Yahweh, who can sojourn in Thy tent?
Who can dwell in Thy holy hill?
He who walks in integrity and works righteousness,
And speaks truth in his heart.
There is no slander upon his tongue;
Neither has he done wrong to his friend;
Nor taken up a reproach against his neighbor.
A reprobate is despised in his eyes;
But he honours those that fear Yahweh.
He swears to his own hurt and does not retract.
He does not give out his money upon interest;
Nor has he taken a bribe against the innocent.
Whoso does such things will never be moved.

142. *Such men have inner resources* that fortify them against the shocks of life. Even when fortune deserts them, faith does not fail them:

Tremble and sin not.
Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.
Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
And put your trust in Yahweh [4:4, 5].

In this trust, the pious looks forward without fear. Yahweh will be mindful of His own.[3] Indeed the loyal servant of Yahweh bears a charmed life. He walks amid the ills of life unharmed:

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree;
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

[1] E.g., 41:12; 101:6 ff.; 112:3; 49:6 ff.
[2] E.g., 34:12–14; 37:27; 92:13 ff. [3] Ps. 73.

Planted in the house of Yahweh,
They shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall bring forth fruit in old age;
They shall be full of sap and richness;
To declare that Yahweh is upright,
My Rock, in whom is no unrighteousness [92:12–15].

Still more vividly is this confidence in God's care for His people expressed in Psalm 91:

He that dwelleth in the intimacy of the Most High,
That sojourneth under the shadow of the Almighty,
Says of Yahweh, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
My God in whom I trust."

Surely He will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,
And from the noisome pestilence.
He will cover thee with His pinions,
And under His wings shalt thou take refuge.
His truth shall be a shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flies by day,
Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction that devastates at noon-day.

A thousand will fall at thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand;
But it shall not come nigh thee.
Thou shalt merely behold with thine eyes,
And see the reward of the wicked.

For Yahweh is thy refuge;
Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation.
Calamity shall not be sent upon thee;
Nor shall plague come nigh thy tent.

For He will give his angels charge concerning thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways.
They will carry thee on their hands,
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt tread upon lion and adder;
The young lion and the serpent thou shalt trample under foot.
Because he has set his love upon Me, I will deliver him;
I will set him on high because he has known My name.

He will call upon Me and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him;
With long life will I satisfy him,
And I will show him My salvation.

143. *Such an idyllic life* can hardly have ever been realized; it is a dream, a vision of faith, rather than an experience. Yet the writer of Psalm 103 bursts into a paean of praise in recognition of just such favors from God:

Bless Yahweh, O my soul,
And all that is within me bless His holy name.
Bless Yahweh, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits,
Who pardons all thine iniquity;
Who heals all thy diseases;
Who redeems thy life from the pit;
Who crowns thee with loving kindness and mercies;
Who satisfies thy desires with good things,
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle.

144. *The ethical motives* of the Psalms are very clearly expressed. The underlying urge to goodness is the familiar conviction that piety pays and wickedness is punished. This idea is the opening note of the Psalter (Ps. 1) and it is sounded over and over again.[1] But there are flashes here and there of a less commercial point of view. The Golden Age is pictured in ethical terms in

[1] Pss. 5:12; 6:10; 9:6; 11:5–7; 34:10, 11, 19, 20; 84:12; 91; 92:12–15; 103:1–18; 112:1–9; 127; 128:1–4; 144:12–15.

Ps. 85:9–13. Righteousness is declared to be better than riches in Ps. 119:72, 127; and the gift of Yahweh may be something better than abundance of corn and wine (Ps. 4:7). But we must go to a psalm that did not find admission into the Psalter to hear the highest note of the poets of Judaism.[1] In the third chapter of Habakkuk is found what is unmistakably a psalm. This is an eschatological poem, portraying the manifestation of divine power which the Psalmist hopes for and expects to see. But at verse 17 the point of view changes. The writer checks himself, apparently, and asks himself some such question as this: "Suppose that my hopes are not realized—what then?" To such a question he makes reply:

> Though the fig-tree do not blossom,
> And there be no fruit on the vines;
> Though the product of the olive fail,
> And the fields yield no food;
> Though the flock be cut off from the fold,
> And there be no ox in the stalls;
> Yet I will exult in Yahweh,
> I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.
> Yahweh, the Lord, is my strength;
> And he has made my feet like hinds' feet;
> And he will make me to walk upon the heights
> [Hab. 3:17–19].

This says that though all material rewards fail, the poet will nevertheless find his highest satisfaction in Yahweh. He takes his refuge in mysticism when practical realities fail. This is convincing proof that there was a growing conviction in Judaism that the needs of the soul were not to be met by mere things.

[1] But cf. Ps. 73:28, "the nearness of God is my good."

145. *A narrow piety.*—The ideal man of the Psalter is a good Jew. His characteristics are such as most good men covet for themselves. He is modest, but self-respecting; honest, straightforward, and faithful, generous and kind. He would be distinctly a desirable citizen in any Jewish community. But he is first and last a Jew. He has been ever on the defensive against the rest of mankind and he has naturally developed no love for them. He hates them with his whole soul. He has no sense of obligation to the world at large. He assumes no responsibility for humanity. His heart does not beat in unison with the heart of mankind. He never dreams of the brotherhood of man and he feels no call to serve the race. His interests and energies are centered upon himself and his own people. He is intensely devoted to them and correspondingly aloof from the rest of the world. He is narrow-minded and exclusive in his outlook upon life. But we must do him justice and keep in mind that in this respect he was no whit inferior to, or different from, the world in general. The conception of human brotherhood had found expression nowhere else in the world at that time and the nearest approach to it was in the writings of the Jews themselves. The writers of the Psalms did not belong, however, to the most liberal and broad-minded circles of the Jewish people, but rather to those who stood for rigid adherence to the old paths. They were orthodox to the core.

It is significant that it was the good fortune of this class of men to create a literature that has ministered to the needs of the pious, both Jew and Christian, through the succeeding centuries. The Psalter is the best known and most used book of the Hebrew Canon.

The literary products of the more liberally minded Jews, greater in literary excellence and broader in outlook, such as Job and Jonah and Isaiah 40–55, never achieved such popularity as belongs to the Psalter. This preference for the Psalms is due to their lyric quality on the one hand and to their genuinely religious fervor on the other. Added to these things is the fact that the average man finds his own ideals and experiences interpreted for him in the Psalms in a way that he can easily understand and thoroughly appreciate. The saint of the Psalter has found a response to his own outpourings of soul in the hearts of the saints of all the ages.

CHAPTER XII

THE MORAL MAXIMS OF THE SAGES

146. *The making of aphorisms* was a favorite pastime in the ancient Semitic Orient. That it was popular in early Egypt is well known and is well attested by the literature that has survived up to the present day.[1] The Babylonians and Assyrians likewise treasured pungent apothegms and passed them on from generation to generation.[2] The Hebrew tradition posits great proverbial activity on the part of Solomon and Hezekiah, and the story of Samson contains one or two homely maxims.[3] There is no reason to suppose that proverb-making was not freely indulged in during the pre-exilic period; and it is quite probable that the nucleus of some of the collections of proverbs now found assembled in the Book of Proverbs was gathered before the Exile. But the Book of Proverbs as it now stands is probably a product of the early Greek period in Judaism, and may well be taken as representative of the ethical practice of that age and of the latter part of the Persian period.[4]

[1] See, for example, A. H. Gardiner, *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage* (1909); G. Maspero, *Les enseignements d'Amenemhaît Ier à son fils Sanouasrit Ier* (1914); J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (1912), Lecture 7; F. Pierret, "Préceptes de morale: extraits d'un papyrus démotique du Musée du Louvre," *Recueil de Travaux*, I, 40–46.

[2] See, for example, R. F. Harper's *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (1901), pp. 448–50; and the Proverbs of Ahikar as translated in Charles's *Apocrypha and Pseudipigrapha*, II (1913), 715–84.

[3] Prov. 1:1; 10:1; 25:1; I Kings 5:12; Judg. 14:14, 18.

[4] The best commentary on Proverbs is that by C. H. Toy in the International Critical Commentary.

The Book of Ecclesiasticus, or more exactly, "The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach," may be classed along with Proverbs. It arose in Alexandria about 200 B.C. and is consequently a bit later than the Book of Proverbs, but the spirit and tone of the two works are practically identical and are representative of the ethics of the common man during the latter part of the history of Judaism.[1]

Proverbial literature, in the very nature of the case, cannot and does not move in the forefront of thought. It rather gathers up the approved judgments of time. It does not present the speculative theories of pioneers, but rather the platitudes of conventional and generally accepted thought. Hence we do not find in the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus anything strikingly new in the field of ethics. The morals of these writers are those of the orthodox thinkers and represent the ideals of the average man. Indeed, much of the content of these maxims is of that ageless variety that might appear at almost any time in a well-ordered and highly developed social organization. The proverbs deal with practical matters and record the results of the observation and experience of the common man.

It is impracticable here, in view of the necessary limits of space, to scrutinize closely all the mass of material presented in Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus. It must suffice us to note the outstanding facts and to limit the illustrative material to a few typical cases. Yet these two books contain more positive, direct, and con-

[1] The best English commentary on Ecclesiasticus is W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus in the Revised Version with Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge Bible, 1912).

crete moral teaching than all the rest of the Old Testament put together. All that we shall obtain here is a bird's-eye view.

147. *The fundamental principles of the sages* are two: (1) that religion is the basis of all true wisdom, knowledge, and morals; (2) that the practice of religion and morality pays dividends in real goods. The first of these principles finds frequent expression. "The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).[1] All wisdom and knowledge come from him (Prov. 2:6). Wisdom includes justice and righteousness (Prov. 8:20). Yahweh is the omniscient supervisor and administrator of the moral universe (Prov. 15:3).[2] The fear of God is the highest good, because it carries with it all other goods:

> Wealth and strength lift up the heart;
> But better than both is the fear of God.
> In the fear of the Lord there is no want,
> And with it there is no need to seek [other] help
> [Ecclus. 40:26].[3]

The sage never imagined the possibility of a separation between religion and ethics. In his eyes no man could be moral who denied God and turned his back upon religion.

148. *That piety pays* is the constant burden of the sages' teachings. Pay your first-fruits and your barns will overflow (Prov. 3:9, 10).[4] Live righteously and you will live long; but live wickedly and you will be

[1] So also Ecclus. 1:11–20.

[2] So also Prov. 16:2, 4, 33; 17:3; 21:2; 22:2; 29:13.

[3] Similarly Ecclus. 2:3, 7–11.

[4] So also Prov. 4:18, 19; 10:3; 11:28, 31; 12:3, 12, 13, 28; 13:6, 9, 22; 14:11, 19, 34; 15:6, 24; 16:7; 21:21; 22:4; 24:16; 25:5.

soon cut off (Prov. 2:19–22).[1] The righteous has a glad outlook before his eyes; but the expectation of the wicked will perish (Prov. 10:28); and "the memory of the wicked shall *rot*" (Prov. 10:7). For such minds there is no problem of suffering. A facile explanation is furnished by the old theory that sin is responsible for all human ills. God chastens his children by sending sufferings upon them (Prov. 3:11, 12). The wicked are not to be an occasion of envy or worry though they may prosper for a while, for their prosperity is but transient and they themselves will quickly perish (Prov. 24:19, 20). The righteous, on the other hand, is delivered out of all his troubles, and the rôle of sufferer temporarily played by him is soon taken permanently by the wicked (Prov. 11:8).[2]

149. *The contents of the terms righteousness and wickedness* are very clearly and explicitly listed by the sages. We can do little here but name the virtues and the vices enumerated in their maxims, and we shall begin with the vices. It is pleasant to find the sages giving far more attention to positive and constructive teaching of virtue than to mere denunciation of sin. They were not prophets nor preachers, delighting in the exposure of evil, but quiet souls who found their satisfaction in making virtue attractive. However, they leave no doubt as to the severity of their disapprobation of evil. They warn the young against the vice of greed and covetousness, together with the envy that is so constant a companion of these two corroding sins.[3] A proud,

[1] So also Prov. 3:2; 4:10; 8:35, 36; 9:11, 18; 10:16, 25, 27, 30; 11:4, 17–19, 21; 12:7, 21; 13:14; 16:31.

[2] Similarly Ecclus. 16:12–14.

[3] Prov. 1:10–19; 14:30; 15:27; 21:26; 28:16; Ecclus. 14:3–19.

haughty, and arrogant spirit meets with emphatic disapproval[1] and the havoc wrought by hatred is vividly suggested.[2] The destructive and disruptive power of hate is sharply contrasted with the forgiving and healing grace of love:

> Hatred stirreth up strifes;
> But love covereth all transgressions [Prov. 10:12].

Much attention is bestowed upon lying, slander, false witnessing, and talebearing.[3] These were fruitful causes of discord and all sorts of evil machinations. Downright murder is spoken of but once (Prov. 28:17); but harlotry and adultery are the occasion of much warning.[4] It is suggestive of the point of view as to woman that the initial responsibility for this sin is in every case but one laid either directly or by implication upon the woman; the man in the case is evidently but a poor victim who needs protection! The one exception is in Ecclus. 23:16–27, where the man is given the blame that is rightly due him.

150. *The vice of drunkenness* is depicted in telling terms that suggest abundant opportunity for observation of its evils on the part of the sages.[5] But, on the other hand, they recognized a legitimate use of wine and did not dream of prohibition.[6] Personal extravagance

[1] Prov. 11:2; 16:18, 19; 18:12; 21:4, 24; 29:23.

[2] Prov. 26:24–26.

[3] Prov. 6:12–19; 10:18; 12:17; 13:5; 14:5; 17:4, 7; 19:5, 9; 20:19; 21:6, 28; 24:28; 25:18; 26:28; 30:10; Ecclus. 20:24, 26.

[4] Prov. 5:1–20; 6:24–35; chap. 7; 22:14; 23:27, 28; 29:3; 30:20; 31:3.

[5] Prov. 20:1; 23:20, 21, 29–35; 31:4, 5.

[6] Prov. 31:6, 7.

on the one hand and parsimoniousness on the other are alike rebuked.[1] Gambling is referred to perhaps once, but naturally in an unfavorable way (Ecclus. 14:15). The more elusive sins of hypocrisy, flattery, deceit, and cunning are abhorrent to the sages' zeal for honesty and reality.[2] The lazy, slothful, indolent man comes in for frequent remark and is spared no sarcasm or stinging rebuke.[3]

151. *The social offenses* listed include the use of false weights and measures,[4] the hoarding of grain,[5] various forms of robbery and oppression of the poor,[6] bribery,[7] the curse that is causeless,[8] unfilial cursing of parents,[9] charging interest upon loans,[10] and returning evil for good.[11] The interests of the sages as distinguished from those of the prophets were primarily and almost exclusively individualistic rather than social. Their problems moved in the field of personal character and not that of social or national well-being. Group interests as such receive no attention from them. Even the influence of the group life upon the individual is untouched. Sociology both in name and in content was to them *terra incognita.*

152. *The virtues commended by* the sages are naturally in large part the opposite of the vices condemned.

[1] Prov. 11:24; 21:17; Ecclus. 4:31; 14:3–7.

[2] Prov. 29:5; Ecclus. 1:29; 5:9—6:1; 19:25, 28.

[3] Prov. 10:5; 15:19; 18:9; 19:15, 24; 20:4, 13; 21:25; 22:13; 23:21; 24:30–34; 26:13, 14; Ecclus. 22:1, 2.

[4] Prov. 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23.

[5] Prov. 11:26.

[6] Prov. 14:31; 22:22, 28; 23:10; 28:3, 6.

[7] Prov. 15:27; 18:16; 29:4.

[8] Prov. 26:2.

[9] Prov. 20:20.

[10] Prov. 28:8.

[11] Prov. 17:13.

Reverence for parents is one of the outstanding characteristics of the good man.[1] The filial spirit reflected in these utterances is beyond praise. Piety toward parents is effective in making atonement for sin. Father and mother alike deserve and must receive every consideration:

> My son, help thy father in his old age.
> And grieve him not all the days of his life.
> Alms to a father shall not be blotted out,
> And it shall stand firm as a substitute for sin.
> In the day of trouble it shall be remembered,
> Obliterating thine iniquities as heat the hoar-frost.
> As one that is arrogant is he that despiseth his father,
> And as one that provoketh his Creator is he that curseth his mother [Ecclus. 3:12–16].

A proper regard for the aged is also required of the good man.[2] Kindness to one's fellow-man and even to animals is praiseworthy.[3] Mercy and truth are joined together and are given great weight in the scales of merit; like charity they "cover a multitude of sins."[4] The commonplace but essential virtue of industry is greatly stressed.[5] It is the outstanding characteristic of the ideal wife.[6] The idea that the good man need only trust in God to take care of him was far from the sage's mind. His philosophy of life was rather, "God helps those who help themselves." As a companion

[1] Prov. 1:8, 9; 6:20; 15:5, 20; 19:26; 23:22–25; 28:7; 30:11, 17; Ecclus. 3:1–16; 16:1–5.

[2] Ecclus. 8:6, 9.

[3] Prov. 12:10; 19:17.

[4] Prov. 3:3; 16:6; 20:28.

[5] Prov. 6:6–11; 10:4; 12:11, 24, 27; 13:4; 21:5; 22:29; 28:19.

[6] Prov. 31:13, 15, 18, 19, 22, 24, 27.

virtue to industry, frugality is approved. The proverb on this subject would serve as an excellent motto for the modern savings bank:

> Wealth gotten in haste shall be diminished,
> But he that gathers little by little shall increase
> [Prov. 13:11].

Amid all the toil and saving there must be a contented mind:

> The chief requisites of life are water and bread,
> And a garment, and a house to cover nakedness:
> Better the life of a poor man under a shelter of logs,
> Than sumptuous fare among strangers.
> Be contented with little or much [Ecclus. 29:21–23].

In the midst of one's own prosperity, thought should be taken for the unfortunate. Charity and generosity toward the needy are given much emphasis.[1] Prompt aid is commended in contrast to the procrastinating kind that delays relief when it might be immediately available. The man who finds satisfaction in the distresses of his fellows is classed with him who blasphemes God. By Jesus, the son of Sirach, almsgiving is accorded merit as atoning for sin.[2] The prophet's emphasis upon the supreme importance of justice and righteousness is echoed in some of the sages' maxims.[3]

> To do righteousness and justice
> Is more acceptable to Yahweh than sacrifice [Prov. 21:3].

[1] Prov. 3:27, 28; 11:25; 17:5; 19:17; 21:13; 22:9, 16; 28:27; Ecclus. 4:1–5; 7:10.

[2] Ecclus. 3:30; 4:10.

[3] Prov. 3:29, 30; 16:12; 18:5; 20:7; 21:15, 18; 24:23–26; 29:2, 6, 7, 14, 16, 27; 31:9; Ecclus. 4:30; 21:4, 8.

The sages' advocacy of justice is wholly lacking in the passion that was so characteristic of the prophet, nor does it have much in mind the national interest that lay so near to the heart of the prophet. Their concern is rather, on the whole, with the relationship of justice to personal character.

153. *The value of friendship* is set very high; and the nature and function of friendship are correctly interpreted. The true friend is sharply differentiated from the fair-weather friend.[1] Much advice and encouragement are given toward the development of self-control.[2] Anger is especially the subject of warning.[3] The evils of quarrelsomeness are vividly depicted;[4] and hasty speech is earnestly deprecated.[5] A fitting spirit of humility is urged upon the good man;[6] at the same time he is bidden not to descend too low in his own estimation but to maintain a proper self-esteem. If he does not value himself, who else will value him (Ecclus. 10:29)?

154. *The attitude of the sages toward foreigners* seems to have become more pronouncedly hostile with the progress of time. Wisdom teaching on the whole seems to have been broad and human in its reactions. In Proverbs little, if any, allusion is made to distinctions between Jew and non-Jew. It is, of course, true that the thought of the sage did not positively include the

[1] Prov. 18:24; Ecclus. 6:5–17; 12:8—13:1.

[2] Prov. 29:11, 20; Ecclus. 6:2–4; 8:11; 18:30—19:3.

[3] Prov. 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 17:1; 19:11, 19; 22:24; Ecclus. 1:22.

[4] Prov. 17:14; 26:21; Ecclus. 8:1–3.

[5] Prov. 13:3; 17:7, 28; 21:23; Ecclus. 19:4–12; 23:7–15.

[6] Prov. 15:33; 18:12; 29:23; Ecclus. 3:17–25; 7:4–7.

interests of foreigners, but at the same time it did not descend to hatred and hostility toward aliens. In Proverbs there is no indubitable criticism of or warning against foreigners.[1] In the Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach, however, the old-time hatred of Edom, Philistia, and the Samaritans reasserts itself.[2] Conversely, the thought of Israel as God's favored nation is confidently expressed:

> For every nation he appointed a ruler,
> But Israel is the Lord's portion [Ecclus. 17:17].

155. *The family.*—The sages give a great deal of consideration to questions relating to women and children. They recognize fully that children are not infrequently a source of grief and anxiety;[3] and they lay stress upon the necessity of discipline in youth that the child may grow up aright.[4] They commend corporal punishment, but would not have it go too far.[5]

> Withhold not chastisement from the child;
> If thou beat him with the rod, he will not die.
> Thou must beat him with the rod,
> And thus rescue him from Sheol [Prov. 23:13, 14].

Good children are highly prized, being looked upon as the most desirable proof of the favor of God.[6] There is no insight into either principles or methods of elementary or secondary education. Knowledge and morals alike must be inculcated by the use of the rod.

[1] The "strange" woman of Proverbs is not a foreigner but rather the wife of another man than the person addressed. Cf. Toy's rendering of Prov. 20:16; 27:13.

[2] Ecclus. 50:25, 26. [3] Prov. 17:21, 25; 19:13. [4] Prov. 22:6.

[5] Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 29:15, 17, 21; Ecclus. 30:1–13.

[6] Prov. 17:6.

Wives, too, are not uniformly satisfactory. Quarrelsome wives seem to have been of very common occurrence.[1] Two types of wives are regarded as intolerable; viz., the woman lacking winsomeness who at last obtains a husband only to find that he comes to hate her, and the maidservant, who succeeds in supplanting her mistress.[2] Jesus, the son of Sirach, is more dubious about women than the earlier proverb-makers were. He bids the husband trust his wife, but fight shy of all other women lest he fall into trouble.[3] He becomes almost savage in his tirade against bad wives:

> Any wickedness, only not the wickedness of a woman.
> There is no wrath above the wrath of a woman.
> There is little malice like the malice of a woman.
> From a woman did sin originate,
> And because of her we all must die [Ecclus. 25:13–26].

He would protect men from the dangers lurking in the ways of bad women and so he paints them in vivid colors.[4] In the same sort of tone, he talks about the worry in which daughters involve their parents; and he closes his words upon this theme with this preposterous statement:

> For from the garment cometh forth the moth,
> And from a woman a woman's wickedness.
> Better the wickedness of a man than the goodness of a woman,
> And a daughter that causeth shame and poureth forth reproach [Ecclus. 42:9–14].

But the sages were not blind to the merits of women; and they frequently give them the highest praise. The

[1] Prov. 19:13; 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15, 16.

[2] Prov. 30:23. [3] Ecclus. 9:1–9. [4] Ecclus. 26:5–12.

good wife is a much coveted treasure for which Yahweh is to be thanked. Jesus, son of Sirach, joins with the older sages in generous praise of such women,[1] but he cannot even in this connection refrain from a sly fling at their volubility:

> A silent woman is a gift from the Lord [Ecclus. 26:14].

In his scale of values, given in chapter 40, he places woman very high.[2] The most attractive picture of womanhood, however, is that presented in Prov. 31:10–31. The first line of this panegyric, as rendered in the English Bible, casts a slur upon womanhood that was far from the writer's thought. The word "virtuous" here has no reference to sexual purity, but is used in the old English sense related to the Latin *virtus*. The Hebrew is difficult to reproduce exactly; but we may use some such adjective as "worthful," "forceful," or "capable." The kind of wife meant is the one described in the poem that follows. It is admitted that such a wife is difficult to obtain, but when found she is of incalculable value. She has indefatigable energy and executive capacity. She is generous and charitable to the poor. She dresses well and takes excellent care of her husband and household. She is wise and kindly and commands the confidence of her husband and the esteem and affection of her children. Such an ideal fails to include many things that characterize the ideal woman of today. It confines woman's sphere of activity to the home and family. It gives her no voice in the affairs of town and state. It leaves no time for the

[1] Prov. 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; Ecclus. 26:1–4, 13–18; 36:21–26; 40:23.

[2] Ecclus. 40:19, 23.

culture of the so-called "fine arts." It puts no emphasis upon intellectual attainments of the more specialized kind. It leaves her social interests unmentioned. But judged by the standards of the times, the soundness of this view of woman cannot be too highly estimated. The things which engage this woman's energies are all in themselves good. As far as she goes she is thoroughly praiseworthy. A people in that period with a conception of ideal womanhood as essentially good as this was in the forefront of moral progress. Other peoples might praise their women for their beauty and physical charms; the Jew, though not despising the beautiful, places his highest estimate upon moral excellence. He praises the homely, household virtues of industry, wisdom, and loving-kindness.

156. *The general characteristics of the wisdom* found in the moral maxims of the sages are readily recognizable. Their observations reveal a marked degree of practicality and shrewd common sense.[1] They face the everyday problem of life, "how can I live a happy, prosperous life, esteemed by my fellow-men and enjoying the favor of God?" In their manifold answer, they display a keen insight into human nature and an open-eyed recognition of facts, e.g.,

> A man's gift makes room for him,
> And brings him before great men [Prov. 18:16].
>
> A gift in secret turns away anger,
> And a present in the bosom violent wrath [Prov. 21:14].
>
> To have respect of persons is not good—
> For a piece of bread a man may sin [Prov. 28:21].

[1] Prov. 10:15; 14:20; 16:26; 19:4, 6, 7; 20:6, 14; 27:10, 21; 29:12; Ecclus. 13:21–23; 27:2; 31:5–11.

They do not lack an occasional glint of humor; for example, in the warning against garrulity, we come across this:

> Hast thou heard anything? Let it die with thee;
> Be of good courage, it will not burst thee [Ecclus. 19:10]!

One of the prevailing notes of the sages is caution. They would not have men give way to wild enthusiasms, or indulge in venturesome enterprises. A man should keep to safe and sure methods and principles. Therefore, a man should be slow to go surety for debts, for he may have to pay them.[1] The sage desires for himself a moderate and well-balanced life that avoids extremes, either of poverty or riches.[2] He cautions his disciples against trusting in wealth and warns them against trying to get rich quickly[3] Practical jokes are put upon his list of prohibitions.[4] The wise will seek the guidance of good counselors, and the prosperity of the state depends upon such counsel.[5]

157. *Pragmatic morals.*—The ethics of the sages can hardly escape the charge of being prevailingly utilitarian. There is constantly held up before the disciple the practical good to be derived by following the course of conduct laid down. It is a high level of utilitarianism upon which the thought of the sages moves, far above a merely material and sensuous interpretation of life. But there is scant recognition of the power and beauty of ideals as

[1] Prov. 6:1–5; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26, 27; Ecclus. 8:12, 13; 29:14–20.

[2] Prov. 30:7–9. [3] Prov. 1:10–19; 20:21; 23:4, 5; 28:20, 22.

[4] Prov. 26:18, 19; cf. Ecclus. 8:4.

[5] Prov. 11:14; cf. 29:18, where Toy would substitute for "vision" some such word as "guidance."

such. There is but little evidence of the thought that "virtue is its own reward." "Be good, because it pays dividends in prosperity, esteem and happiness," is the sages' advice; not, "be good, because goodness is a blessed thing in and of itself."[1] In addition to this defect the ethics of these maxims is in the main egoistic, individualistic, and self-centered. There is little trace of altruism or of social interest. The thought of the individual as living for the good of the whole rather than for his own self-interest is scarcely perceptible. A man has certain positive obligations, it is true, to parents and children and to the poor and weak; and he is expected to conduct himself toward the community at large as a decent citizen; but there is no thought of any direct and positive obligation on the part of a citizen to strive for the betterment of society or to work for the progress of the state. The vision of the sages moves within a restricted area and does not extend to the farthest confines of his world. He lived too early in history for this larger world-view to have been possible for him.

The method of the sages is not synthetic, but atomistic. There may have been in their minds certain great underlying ethical unities; but, if so, they never came to expression. They talk not in terms of character but in those of action. Life for them consists in deeds; and a man is judged by his acts rather than by his motives. On the other hand, the sages recognize certain great moral principles to which a man must adjust himself if he would succeed. They constitute a sort of moral law, the mandates of which are inexorable. In the words of Professor C. H. Toy:

[1] Cf. Prov. 11:17; 14:30; 15:15.

The sages set forth a natural law in the moral world, which is no more capable of pity than physical law; the rule is: be wise or perish—it is the rule of the ethical philosopher, not of the patriot or the preacher. In this respect, as in others, we are struck by the modernness of Proverbs: prophets and historians often seem remote from us, and sometimes even the psalms; but Proverbs might almost have been written yesterday.[1]

158. *A melancholy note* is occasionally sounded by the sages. They were too wide-awake to ignore completely the tragic element in life, notwithstanding their view that all things work together for good to them that fear God. Sorrow is common to all;[2] and outward manifestations of joy sometimes conceal inner grief.[3] This prevalence of sorrow is explicable, for all men are guilty of sin.[4] No man may be adjudged happy till he dies, for death may reveal the saddening truth.[5] Death is the end of all men;[6] and the wicked die prematurely.[7] There is no outlook beyond the grave, and life is too short to permit full attainment of all possibilities:

> For all things cannot be in men,
> For a son of man is not immortal [Ecclus. 17:30].

But even so, the tragedy of life is not allowed to obscure the joy. The good man is no pessimist. He enters fully into the joy of living:

> The path of the righteous is like the light of the dawn,
> Which shines ever brighter till the full day comes
> [Prov. 4:18].

The good man carries a glad heart, which is an antidote for sickness and sorrow.[8] The wicked are prostrated by

[1] *Encyclopedia Biblica*, col. 3914.

[2] Prov. 14:10. [4] Prov. 20:9. [6] Ecclus. 7:17; 41:1–4.

[3] Prov. 14:13. [5] Ecclus. 11:28. [7] Prov. 10:27; 11:7.

[8] Prov. 10:22; 14:30; 15:13, 15; 17:22; 29:6; Ecclus. 1:11 ff.

misfortune, but the righteous has confidence in trouble because of his integrity.[1] He may trust Yahweh and need not envy the wicked, because his hope for reward will not come to naught.[2] Men reap what they sow; and the pious may count upon full fruition of their hopes.[3] Good advice is given to mourners, though perhaps it does seem a bit unfeeling and cold-blooded, not to say hypocritical.[4] But mourning is not to be allowed to dominate a life. Death is the common lot of man, and is to be accepted in a philosophical spirit.

159. *Moral heights.*—In bringing this chapter to a close, we shall note some of the highest levels attained by these sages. Wealth is by no means their highest good. Wisdom far transcends it.[5] Love in a cottage is better than hatred in a palace.[6] Poverty is far from being the worst misfortune.[7] Truthfulness and a good reputation are better than riches.[8] Sound knowledge is the best of jewels.[9] In the scale of values formulated by Jesus, son of Sirach,[10] the prizes are awarded to wisdom, true love between man and woman, purity of speech, a "discreet wife," righteousness, good counsel, and best of all—the fear of God. Emphasis is laid upon the inner life as the source of all activities.[11] The ethical content of religion is stressed even as by the prophets.[12] True

[1] Prov. 14:32; cf. Toy's Commentary, *in loc.*

[2] Prov. 23:18; 24:19, 20.

[3] Ecclus. 3:26–31; 14:1.

[4] Ecclus. 38:16–23.

[5] Prov. 3:13–15; 8:11, 19; 16:16; Ecclus. 10:30—11:1.

[6] Prov. 15:16, 17.

[7] Prov. 19:22.

[8] Prov. 22:1.

[9] Prov. 20:15.

[10] Ecclus. 40:18–27.

[11] Prov. 4:23.

[12] Prov. 15:18f; 21:27; Ecclus. 34:19—35:17.

friendship is highly exalted;[1] the demands made upon long-suffering human nature by the sages are not light. Even if a borrower is ungrateful, the good must keep on lending to him.[2] The *lex talionis* is discarded; the good man will not repay the one who wrongs him "tit for tat," but will forgive that he himself may be forgiven.[3] Nor will he humiliate the penitent, for he will bear in mind that all men are sinners.[4] The good will not even exult over the misfortunes of the wicked, for that might lead Yahweh to turn away his wrath from the wicked! Behind this rather shocking sentiment there is a feeling that it is unseemly to delight in the afflictions of others. The Sermon on the Mount with its "if thine enemy hunger, feed him," etc., is anticipated in Prov. 25:21, 22, but the motive is somewhat mixed.

> For thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head,
> And Yahweh will reward thee.

The spirit that animated the Jews in the terrible struggle against Antiochus Epiphanes finds stirring expression in Ecclus. 4:28:

> Strive for the right till death,
> And the Lord will reward thee.

Jesus, son of Sirach, lays down clearly the proposition that the will of man is free. He is not a mere pawn upon the chess-board. He is master of his own destiny. He must fight out his battle with his own evil nature,[5] and victory is within his reach:

[1] Prov. 17:17; Ecclus. 14:13.
[2] Ecclus. 29:1–13.
[3] Prov. 24:29; Ecclus. 27:30—28:7.
[4] Ecclus. 8:5.
[5] Ecclus. 15:14; cf. the article by F. C. Porter on "The Yecer Hara—A Study in the Jewish Doctrine of Sin," in *Biblical and Semitic Studies, Critical and Historical Essays by the Members of the Biblical and Semitic Faculty of Yale University* (1901), pp. 93–156.

If thou desirest, thou canst keep the commandment,
And it is wisdom to do his good pleasure,
And if thou trust him, of a truth thou shalt live.
Poured out before thee are fire and water,
Stretch forth thy hand unto that which thou desirest.
Life and death are before man,
That which he desires shall be given him
[Ecclus. 15:15–17].

There is no citation of authority by the sages. They do not seek to add any extraneous influence to their utterances. They proceed rather upon the view that "truth is its own best witness." So they are content to state the truth as they see it and to allow it to make its own unaided appeal to the hearts of men. They have enough confidence in human nature to believe that it will respond to the best in life when that is presented and they sincerely believe that they have the best.

CHAPTER XIII

A SAINT UNDER FIRE

160. *The Book of Job* is one of the masterpieces of world literature. It deals with the eternally insoluble problem of suffering. It represents an ideal man as the victim of hostile circumstances losing all that men hold dear, save life itself, yet holding fast to his integrity. His sufferings constitute the theme of discussion between him and three of his friends. They argue that his misfortunes demonstrate his sinfulness; he repudiates the charge and challenges the moral order of the universe. He has, on the whole, the better of the argument. But he and his friends are alike rebuked and corrected by Yahweh himself in a speech which forms the climax of the book. Thereupon Job is restored to his former prosperity, and his friends are forgiven for his sake.

161. *The theme of the book* is as old as the thought of man. The ancient Egyptians had dealt with it early in their literary history;[1] and the old Babylonians had also given it serious thought.[2] The Book of Job itself takes an old story as its basis and sets itself the task of proving that the old solution of the problem of suffering is no solution at all. The point of view of the author of the book is independent and creative. Naturally it did not commend itself to some minds and they sought to supplement it and correct it by the addition of new material.

[1] See James H. Breasted, *The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (1912), pp. 188 ff.

[2] See George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (1916), pp. 392–97.

Such additions are represented particularly by the speeches of Elihu (chaps. 32–37), and a large section of the speech of Yahweh (40:6—41:34), and the description of Wisdom in chapter 28.[1]

162. *The development of the thought* of the book, compellingly interesting as it is, cannot be followed through here step by step. We shall rather analyze and summarize the contribution of the discussion to the problem of suffering, hoping that this will send some readers to the Book of Job itself for direct contact with the author's thought in all its beauty and power. The problem of the book, more precisely formulated, is this: How can the fact of suffering on the part of the good be best accounted for in a supposedly moral universe and under the administration of a moral God? Or, more succinctly stated, is God moral? There are several responses to these queries in the Book of Job, and to these we now turn.

163. *The theory of life* held by Job and the three friends alike is to the effect that the pious life ought to be the prosperous life and conversely, the wicked should suffer. The difference between the friends and Job is that they say that life is actually organized and administered upon the basis of this principle; while Job declares emphatically that it is not. Herein lies Job's problem. The pious ought to be rewarded for their piety, and the wicked ought to suffer for their sin; but the experiences

[1] The best English books on Job are: S. R. Driver and G. Buchanan Gray, *The Book of Job* (International Critical Commentary, 1921); A. S. Peake, *The Book of Job* (New Century Bible, 1904); A. B. Davidson and H. C. O. Lanchester, *The Book of Job* (Cambridge Bible, 1918); Morris Jastrow, Jr., *The Book of Job* (1920); M. Buttenwieser, *The Book of Job* (1922).

of life show that this is not the way in which things really go. Job is represented by the author as having lived the pious life par excellence (Job 1:8), and as having received his appropriate reward of material prosperity up to the point at which the story begins (Job 1:1–5). The moral elements in the life of such a man are of particular interest and value for our study. A catalogue of Job's virtues is given in his *apologia pro vita sua* found in chapters 29–31. The moral qualities here listed are of course representative of the highest ideal of life in the period from which the Book of Job comes. Job declares himself to have been a ready helper of the poor and weak. Orphans and widows found in him succor and strong defense against the oppressor.[1] He even felt himself to be brother to his slaves.[2] He was always to be found upon the side of justice and righteousness and was of impeccable honesty.[3] He was possessed of a cheerful, buoyant disposition which made him an encouragement and joy to his fellows.[4] He eschewed all forms of insincerity and deceit,[5] and had no consciousness of any secret sins.[6] He was wholly free from sexual taint, avoiding even impure thoughts, much more acts of shame.[7] He disclaimed all undue esteem for wealth and declared that he never put his hope and confidence in his riches.[8] He shared his abundance with the less fortunate and practiced a liberal hospitality both toward his neighbors and toward travelers.[9] He had been faithful to all obligations arising out of his position as a holder and tiller of

[1] Job 29:12–17; 31:16–20.
[2] Job 31:13–15.
[3] Job 29:14, 16*b*, 17; 31:7.
[4] Job 29:21–15.
[5] Job 31:5.
[6] Job 31:33, 34.
[7] Job 31:1, 9.
[8] Job 31:24, 25.
[9] Job 31:31, 32.

the soil.[1] Best of all, he did not find any satisfaction in the misfortunes of his personal enemies, nor had he ever called down curses upon them.[2] A survey of these claims will reveal that there is here nothing new. All these ideals have found expression already in the earlier literature. The unusual thing is that these virtues are all concentrated in one ideal person, so that Job becomes a man without a flaw. But Job's pre-eminence is not so much in the realm of deeds, as in that of thought. It is in the quality of his mind and its courage and strength, as revealed in the long debate, that his supremacy lies.

164. *The setting of the problem* is given in the Prologue to the Book of Job (chaps. 1–2). The perfect man, Job, is held up by Yahweh as a character beyond reproach. The Satan challenges this proposition, intimating that there is no such thing among men as disinterested piety (Job 1:9–11). Job has been good because it paid. If his prosperity and welfare were interfered with Job would abandon his piety without delay. The Satan functions here as a prosecuting attorney, with a strong prejudice against the prisoner at the bar; compare Zechariah. He is also the intermediary agent who carries the direct responsibility for the suffering of the pious and thereby lifts the load from Yahweh's back. Suffering can thus be thought of as the work of the Satan and not be charged up against God. Job underwent the test of the loss of his prosperity and of his children and came out with his piety unscathed (Job 1:13–22). The Satan thereupon insists that the test was not thorough enough and that if pushed

[1] Job 31:38 f. This passage eludes exact interpretation; see the commentaries, *in loc.*

[2] Job 31:29, 30.

further Job's character would break down; but Job undergoes the final test and passes with a grade of 100 per cent plus (Job 2:1–10). The contribution of the Prologue is very clear, definite, and important. The truly pious man does not demand rewards as the prerequisite for his continuance in the way of goodness. Piety is a quality of the inner life which is not dependent upon outer circumstances. Virtue is its own reward. A commercialized piety would not stand the strain of the untoward experiences of life.

165. *The Job of the discussion* is a changed man. His equanimity has vanished. He challenges the worthfulness of life and wishes that he had never been born. He shocks his pious, orthodox friends by the daring attacks he makes upon the moral order. They undertake to reason with him and to restore him to a normal way of thinking. They are perfectly satisfied with the conventional view as to the place and function of suffering in life; and they keep on reiterating it, despite Job's indignant and forceful expostulations. That view is that suffering is the punishment for sin and that the pious suffer only temporarily. The wicked perish prematurely, but the pious live to a ripe old age. Job, therefore, has no warrant for his complaint, if he is the righteous man he seems to have been.[1] He can rest assured that he will not be cut off from life before his time. His piety is his guaranty of well-being. This is the teaching of the former generations of wise men and ought to be trusted.[2]

Job, though accepting this as the right theory of life, cites the facts of experience to show that the theory does

[1] Job 4:6–9; 5:1–6; 11:20; 15:20–35; 18:5. [2] Job 8:8–20.

not operate in the actual everyday world. The wicked flourish and prosper; they grow richer and richer; they pay no heed to God, esteeming it useless to worship him; and they die an easy death, not suffering months and years of agony as Job is doing. If the friends would save their theory by the claim that the punishment for sin often lights upon the sinner's children, Job protests that this is unfair, and that the sinner should suffer for his own sin.[1] Job, therefore, represents the newer doctrine of individual responsibility before God and repudiates the old doctrine of family solidarity.[2]

166. *Traditional views.*—The friends can but admit that suffering does befall the pious. They account for this disturbing fact in two ways. They declare that the sufferings of the righteous are merely temporary and are sent upon the pious for purposes of a disciplinary character. They are to correct the errors of the pious and lead them back into the paths of righteousness. If Job will but make acknowledgment of his sins and repent, he will be at once restored to the divine favor and be crowned with blessings of prosperity. This promise is most beautifully phrased by Eliphaz:

> Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth;
> And despise thou not the chastening of the Almighty.
> For he maketh sore, and bindeth up;
> He woundeth, and his hands heal.
> In six troubles he will deliver thee;
> And in seven no evil will touch thee.
> In famine he will redeem thee from death;
> And in war from the power of the sword.
> From the scourge of the tongue thou shalt be hid;
> Neither shalt thou be afraid of desolation when it cometh.

[1] Job 21:7–21. [2] See pp. 127 f., 176.

At destruction and death thou shalt laugh;
And of the beasts of the earth be thou not afraid.
For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field;
And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee,
And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace;
And thou shalt visit thy homestead and shalt miss nothing.
Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great,
And thine offspring as the herbage of the earth.
Thou shalt come to thy grave in firm strength,
As a shock of corn cometh in in its season [Job 5:17–26].[1]

167. *A second line of defense* is put up by the friends in the proposition that human nature as such is sinful and must therefore suffer punishment. Job is after all only a man; and as such shares the faults of his kind and must likewise share their punitive sorrows and pains. Eliphaz puts this impressively in his first address where he represents himself as having learned this great truth by a special, direct revelation from God:

For to me a word was stealthily conveyed,
And my ear received a whisper thereof.
In meditations, from visions of the night,
When deep sleep falls upon men,
Terror fell upon me and trembling,
And all my bones were made to fear.
A breeze passed over my face;
The hair of my flesh was made to stand on end.
It stood still—and I could not discern its appearance,
A form was before mine eyes;
Silence—and I heard a voice:
"Can one be just before God,
Or can a man be pure before his Maker?
Behold, he puts no trust in his servants;
And to his angels he ascribes error.
How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
Whose basis is in the dust!

[1] Cf. Job 11:13–19; 22:21–30.

They are crushed more quickly than a moth;
Between morning and evening they are pulverized.
Without anyone heeding,
They perish forever.
When their tent-cord is plucked up,
Do they not die—and that without wisdom?"
[Job 4:12–21.]

Such a being as man is "born unto trouble even as sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). Incidentally, this frailty and sinfulness of man are largely due to the fact that he is born of woman! This prejudice against woman is shared by both sides of the discussion. Both Eliphaz[1] and Bildad[2] give expression to it, and Job is no less emphatic upon the subject.[3]

Job never tires of confronting the theories of the friends with facts drawn from his own observation and experience. He valiantly maintains that he has not been guilty of any such gross sin as his sufferings would imply. He is suffering without due cause.[4] The friends cannot accept Job's claims without giving up their theology. Forced to choose between their friend and their theology, they cling to their theories and interpret their friend in accordance with theory rather than facts. So they boldly charge Job with being guilty of glaring crimes. The sufferings of Job are their only evidence for these; but they are aided to their conclusion by the bitterness of spirit that has characterized so much of Job's utterance. Zophar, the bluntest of the three friends, goes so far as to maintain that Job has not suffered to the full extent of his sins; he deserves to suffer even more.[5]

[1] Job 15:14–16. [2] Job 25:4. [3] Job 2:9, 10; 14:1.
[4] Job 6:10, 30; 16:17; 23:10–12; 27:1–6; 29:12–17; 31:1–40.
[5] Job 11:6; cf. Bildad, in 8:3–6; and Eliphaz, in 22:5–9.

168. *Job indignantly repudiates these charges*, and, forced by his theology, throws back the responsibility for his suffering upon God himself, whom he declares to be non-moral, if not immoral. God is attacking him furiously.[1] God is too great and powerful to concern himself with the details of human life.[2] He disregards the moral interests of his world:

> Though I be righteous, my own mouth condemns me;
> I am innocent, but he has proved me perverse;
> I do not know myself. I despise my life.
> It is one; therefore, I say,
> Innocent and wicked he destroys.
> If the scourge kills suddenly,
> He mocks at the trial of the pure.
> The earth is given into the hand of the wicked;
> He covers the faces of its judges.
> If it is not he, then who is it [Job 9:20–24]?[3]

Under conditions like these, Job's thoughts turn to death as his way of escape. He dwells upon the rest and peace of Sheol, where all classes of men are equal and all cares cease.[4] He protests against the fact that life is forced upon men though they do not want to live.[5] Life is an intolerable burden, ending in the grave.[6] Death ends all. Even God himself cannot recover Job after he shall have died.[7] Life on earth is brief; and there is no worthful life beyond the grave.[8]

169. *Flashes of insight.*—In the midst of all this bitterness and gloom, Job sends forth flashes of insight that compel admiration. He steadfastly and repeatedly

[1] Job 6:4; 19:6 ff.; 19:21 f.
[2] Job 9:1–19.
[3] Cf. Job 10:3; 12:6.
[4] Job 3:11–19.
[5] Job 3:20–26; 10:18–22.
[6] Job 7:1–10; 17:13–16.
[7] Job 7:21.
[8] Job 14:1–22; 16:22.

refuses to stultify himself by making confession of sins of which he has no consciousness. He knows himself to be essentially sound, and though there is much in the world that he declares himself unable to understand, he clings fast to the fact of his own integrity. Of that he is sure. He knows himself. He is so sure of this that he is forced to the further assurance that God himself will in due time be compelled to recognize his innocence. Like the friends, he interprets his troubles as an expression of the wrath of God; but he looks forward to a time when God's wrath shall be past, and his own true character be recognized by his God. He appeals from Philip drunk to Philip sober. Like Mohammed, he realizes that there is "no appeal from God except to God."

> O earth, cover not my blood;
> And let there be no place for my cry;
> Yet now, behold, my witness is in the heavens;
> And he who vouches for me is on high.
> My friends scorn me;
> Unto God mine eye drops tears [Job 16:18–20].

He has a deep underlying faith in the justice of God. He refuses to believe that God can or will endure any specious or unfair advocacy of his own cause; God insists upon truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.[1] The friends, therefore, by shutting their eyes to facts, are rendering themselves liable to the wrath of God.

He himself longs for an opportunity to present his case to God that he may obtain a full vindication.[2] The certainty of such a future vindication seems to come to him in the famous passage, 19:25 ff. Unfortunately, the text of this passage is so imperfect and ambiguous

[1] Job 13:7–12, 16. [2] Job 23:3–12; cf. 19:23 f.

that it is scarcely susceptible of translation and interpretation. The certain elements in the verse are two, viz., (1) "I know my vindicator lives," and (2) "I shall see God." The intervening lines elude precise definition. Job repeats the assurance that God is on his side and declares that he himself will be conscious of God's vindication of him. Whether he thinks of that vindication as coming before or after death we cannot discover. If the expectation of vindication looks forward to its realization in a life after death, then the passage can hardly be thought of as having been an original element in the Book of Job. It is a later addition to the discussion by some reader or copyist. The Book of Job nowhere else recognizes a worthful existence after death. This passage therefore would be foreign to the thought of the book. Indeed, the language of the book in regard to death is so positively against the hope of life after death that the presence of that thought on Job's lips would be inexplicable.[1] The splendor of Job's position lies in the fact that he remains true to himself and faithful to his ideals though he sees no solution to his problems, either in this life or in another. He is confident that God knows him and knows that he is righteous, and he is certain that at some time in the future he will have the satisfaction of vindication at the bar of God; and with that he must be content.

170. *The climax of the Book of Job* is reached in the appearance of Yahweh upon the scene. Here the author

[1] This is felt to such an extent by G. B. Gray, *ad loc.*, that he declines to recognize a full-fledged hope of a future life here, but sees rather an expectation of a temporary restoration to consciousness of sufficient length only to permit Job to see his vindication at the bar of God's judgment.

of the book speaks his message. The vision of God grants Job the interview for which he had been longing. But both Job and the friends meet with rebuke. Job's maintenance of his integrity against the insinuations and accusations of the friends is tacitly approved. Thereby the friends are shown to have been wrong. The omnipotence and omniscience of God are set forth in majestic terms and it is unmistakably shown how far the power and wisdom of the deity transcend the comprehension of man. Thereby, Job is shown to have been in the wrong when he was so foolish and impertinent as to make charges against the character of God. All this has its effect upon Job, who is satisfied by the vision of God and made profoundly conscious of his own limitations. The contribution of the Yahweh speeches, therefore, is not in the form of an ethical solution of the problem of suffering, but rather in the inculcation of a befitting religious attitude toward the problem. The point of the speech is that Job should trust God even though he does not and cannot understand all the workings of the physical world, let alone the moral universe.

The author of the Book of Job had no positive theory to present or expound. He recognized the insolubility of the problem of suffering. His only purpose was to show the utter inadequacy of the current or orthodox view as to the cause and function of suffering. He used the character, Job, to utter his views on this point. Through the discourses of Job he shattered the conventional orthodoxy as to suffering and lifted an intolerable burden from the minds of many sufferers who read his message. He showed them that the suffering soul is not necessarily a victim of the wrath of God; and so

freed them from a terrible uneasiness and dread. But notwithstanding Job's splendid stand against the conventional view of suffering, that view continued to hold its ground with the common man and is regnant over many minds even yet.

171. *The speeches of Elihu.*—The original Book of Job did not satisfy everybody. One of the malcontents has put his views on record and incorporated them into the Book of Job itself. They are represented in the speeches of Elihu (chaps. 32–37). Elihu is introduced to supplement the teachings of the friends. He is essentially in sympathy with their point of view, but thinks that they have not done full justice to it. He therefore makes the following additional suggestions. In reply to Job's complaint that God does not communicate with men, he maintains that God does speak to men and that in two ways, (1) through dreams, and (2) through chastisements which God sends upon men for the purpose of discipline, that they may be trained aright and that their mounting pride may be kept within bounds, lest they dash headlong to destruction.[1] He likewise argues that God as the governor of the world is above and beyond the criticism of mere man.[2] He also points out that God has nothing to gain or lose by man's righteousness or unrighteousness and that he is therefore not moved by self-interest in his dealings with man.[3] And he closes his address with the proposition that God is beyond all possibility of being understood by men, even in his creation and administration of the physical universe. His whole effort is to save the char-

[1] Job 33:15–28. [2] Job 34:17 ff. [3] Job 35:1–8.

acter of God. He adds nothing to the solution of the ethical problem.

172. *The limitations of the discussion.*—The entire treatment of the problem of suffering in the Book of Job is noteworthy for what it lacks, and not only for what it gives. The treatment is conspicuously and exclusively a religious one. The problem is conceived of in terms of religion and wrought out along religious lines. There is no recognition of the contribution of suffering to life. The nearest approach to this is the emphasis laid upon the repressive restraint that suffering lays upon certain tendencies in human nature which, if developed too far, would bring man into opposition with God. But that suffering should function in a positive way toward the enrichment and deepening of character is a thought that never enters the mind of the friends, Elihu, or Job. The function of pain as a danger signal; the rise of sympathy for our fellows because of our own similar experiences making us appreciative of the meaning of certain aspects of life; the driving power of suffering in the creation of dissatisfaction with existing conditions, and a hunger for improvement in the standards of life, all of which eventuate in the making of a better world; the testing and purifying of human love as it goes through the fire of suffering and comes out spiritualized and ethicized to a degree unknown apart from suffering; these are aspects of the ethical and social side of the problem that the Book of Job left for later generations to discover.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MEANING OF LIFE AND THE LIGHT OF LOVE

173. *Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs.*—In this chapter we bring together, for convenience's sake, two books which are as widely separated one from the other in spirit and method as two books could well be. The books in question are Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. They are alike only in the fact that they both lie outside the circles of thought within which the rest of the Old Testament moves. Without them the Old Testament would be a narrower and a poorer book.

174. *The Book of Ecclesiastes.*—Like most of the Old Testament books Ecclesiastes is a composite work. It contains at least three main strata. The original writer, whom we may call Qoheleth, using the Hebrew title of the book, has been called an agnostic, a skeptic, a "gentle cynic," and the like, terms indicative of the general character of his contribution. His work has been supplemented and corrected by an orthodox editor who sought to furnish an antidote for the heresy so powerfully presented by Qoheleth. This orthodox contribution is responsible for the admittance of Qoheleth into the Sacred Canon and is therefore deserving of deep gratitude from all students. But we shall find nothing new for our consideration in this element in the book and shall therefore confine our attention to Qoheleth proper. The third stratum of Ecclesiastes consists of certain harmless platitudes reflecting the

mind of the average sage, which we can well afford to neglect.[1]

175. *The times of Qoheleth.*—Qoheleth did his work in the early part of the Greek period of Jewish history. This began formally with Alexander's conquest of the oriental world. But the Orient had been in close contact with the Hellenic mind for some time prior to that event; and Alexander's conquest was as much a conquest of mind as one of arms. Alexander sought not merely to subdue the oriental world on the field of battle, but also to Hellenize the Orient. He gave great impetus to the Hellenizing movement already under way. Greek cities were founded on strategic sites as centers of culture, whence Greek influences might go out to permeate the surrounding regions. A great library grew up in Alexandria where the literary treasures of both Occident and Orient were gathered together and made accessible to students. Greek merchants and Greek mercenaries carried the goods, the arts, the crafts, the thoughts, and the ideals of Greece throughout the oriental world.

176. *Qoheleth's political background* was Greek. His economic world was in Greek hands. His philosophic masters were Greeks. His religion could not wholly escape the influence of the dominant people who determined the conditions amid which it functioned. That Qoheleth's mind was not untouched by Greek thought is proved from the fact that he has been variously interpreted as a disciple of the Epicureans,[2] a follower of

[1] The best English studies of Ecclesiastes are: A. H. McNeile, *Introduction to Ecclesiastes* (1904); George A. Barton, *A Critical Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes* (1908); Morris Jastrow, *A Gentle Cynic* (1919).

[2] So Paul Haupt, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (1905).

the Stoics,[1] and a pupil of Heraclides.[2] But no one of these views has succeeded in winning general approval. The characteristics of Qoheleth that have led to the formulation of such theories seem better accounted for by a more general hypothesis. It is not necessary to make Qoheleth an exponent of any particular type of Greek philosophy. It is more probable that the Greek spirit which was shed abroad among all men of culture was shared by him and affected his mode of thought and utterance. The Greek philosophical and speculative attitude of mind was a common characteristic of the intellectual world at large. It dominated the thinking of the day. It was a part of the commonly accepted *Weltanschauung* of the educated world. It was like the so-called scientific spirit of the present day, which more or less directly influences all intellectual effort. Many who are influenced by it know practically nothing of science in the strict sense. Just as many a writer today uses the method and terms of the science of evolution, though often knowing next to nothing about evolution itself, so Qoheleth ordered his discussion of the problem of the worthfulness of life by Greek canons though not necessarily knowing Greek philosophy at first hand. A new attitude of mind was abroad in the oriental world and Qoheleth could not escape it. Indeed it seems to have been congenial to him, so that he easily shook off the old dogmatic shackles of his Semitic and Jewish teachers and launched out into the freedom of inquiry and investigation which was so characteristic of the Greek mind.

[1] T. Tyler, *Ecclesiastes* (2d ed., 1899); Plumptre, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (Cambridge Bible, 1892).

[2] Pfleiderer, *Die Philosophie des Heraklit von Ephesus* (1886)

177. *The question that Qoheleth set himself* to answer was, Is life worth living? He approached this problem by many avenues, all of which led him out on to the same bare and bleak plateau. His course of thought may be briefly traced and summarized here, after which its merits and limitations may be indicated.

178. *Qoheleth's opinions.—a*) Qoheleth declares that *the world is a cycle in ceaseless movement.* Everything ends where it began. There is never anything new. What seems new is but the old coming back into human experience again. Men too, like everything else, come and go and are soon forgotten. It has always been so; and it always will be so (Eccles. 1:3–11).

b) I have tried, says Qoheleth, all aspects of life, and have come to the same conclusion for all: *there is no substantial or permanent gain within the reach of man.* I became a student of life in its multiform varieties, and I saw that human effort at betterment was futile. Even my own studies were of no value. I tried the many forms of amusement and found them a hollow mockery. I gave myself to the task of building up a great estate, with every convenience and luxury that great wealth could furnish. I did not forsake my wisdom while following these interests; and I enjoyed myself as I went along; but there was no substantial or permanently satisfying result to all my labor (Eccles. 1:12—2:11).

c) I surveyed the whole area of human experience, and what did I find? That wisdom excels folly as light does darkness, I grant you; *but wise and foolish come to the same end and are alike forgotten.* Therefore I have come to hate life. Of what use is all man's labor? He cannot take it with him; and he has no assurance

that he will leave it in wise hands. To what purpose does a man spend weary days and anxious nights? To leave his substance to a man who never lifted his hand to honest labor? As I see life, the thing to do is to eat and drink and enjoy one's self as one goes along, getting pleasure from the toil itself and thanking God for the opportunity to labor (Eccles. 2:12–25).

d) *Everything in the order of nature is fixed and predetermined.* Man cannot change a single iota; his efforts are utterly futile. The arrangements of the universe are admirable; but God has implanted in the mind of man a conception of eternity, so that he can never satisfy himself with the mere present. Yet he lacks the capacity to see beyond the present and survey the whole program of God from start to finish. So man must content himself with his food and drink and the joy of his work, all of which is the gift of God. But God's work is finished; he has left nothing for man to do; past, present, and future are all wrought out in the mind of God; it is a predetermined universe (Eccles. 3:1–15).

e) *There is no moral order in human society.* Things are topsy-turvy. As I have pondered upon this, I have come to the conclusion that it is God's way of revealing to men their true nature—they are no better than brutes. Man and beast alike die; all alike return to the dust; and who shall say whether or not the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast downward? So my conviction is that man should rejoice in his daily toil, for he will never know what follows upon his death. And when one considers the problem of oppression in society and the sorrow and pain resulting from it, the dead are to be congratulated that they are dead; and

they would have been better off still if they had never been born. The skilful and industrious man does but arouse the envy of his fellows; of what value then is his toil? Better to be content with but a little. Especially is this true of the solitary man, whose hard-earned wealth does him no good; nor has he anyone upon whom to bestow it. The recent changes in political affairs strikingly illustrate my proposition that there is nothing of permanent value. One king went and another came; and though the new king is wise and the old one was a fool, yet both in turn will be alike forgotten by the masses (Eccles. 4:1–16).

f) There is no genuine value in wealth. The only satisfaction the rich man has in his riches is in the consciousness that he possesses them. They are a constant worry to him and rob him of his sleep. He is never sure of retaining his possession of them. His children may squander his wealth for him. In any case, he must leave it behind at death. Of what use, then, was it that he should have worn himself out in obtaining his wealth? The only sensible course is to eat, drink and be merry while life lasts. If you have had riches and enjoyed the use of them, thank God. Enjoy yourself as you go along and life will not be an altogether intolerable burden. The commonly accepted valuations of life are all wrong. Of what value are riches, no matter how great, if their owner cannot make use of them, but must see others use them? Or if a man have a hundred children and live to a ripe old age, but gets no satisfaction while he lives and is deprived of burial when he dies, it would have been better for him to have been born dead. For then he would have escaped all worry. If a man should live

two thousand years and fail to enjoy himself while he was living, of what value would it be? Would he not go at last to the same place as other people? Or, in what way is a wise man any better off than a fool? Man's career is predetermined for him by God and cannot be changed. Nobody can tell what is best for a man while he lives, nor what will happen after he dies (Eccles. 5:7–19; 6:1–6, 8, 10–12).

g) *The sooner one dies the better*, and mourning is preferable to mirth. God's work is fixed and unchangeable, no matter what man may do. Man must adjust himself to changes of fortune and realize that God does not intend to permit any knowledge of the future. The righteous often perish notwithstanding their righteousness and sinners live out their days in sin. Be not over-righteous nor over-wise, nor over-wicked, nor foolish unless you desire a speedy end. Let moderation in all things be your policy. There are none wholly without sin. Man cannot attain wisdom; amid all my searching, I have found only one certainty, viz., that you may come across one good and wise man in a thousand, but not one woman (Eccles. 7:1–3, 13–20, 23–28).

h) *The misery of all miseries* for man is that he can know nothing of the future. He does not even know the length of his life, nor can he in any way defer the day of his death. No amount of wickedness and no formal piety will avail to shield a man from death. Not only so, but the righteous often receive the reward properly due the wicked; and vice versa. I therefore deem it best that man should eat, drink and be merry as he goes along life's way, taking it all as the gift of God (Eccles. 8:6*b*–10, 14, 15).

i) I have discovered *life to be a riddle that no man can solve*, no matter how hard he try. Men are all alike in the hands of God and none knows whether God will treat him kindly or cruelly. All share the same final fate and no moral discrimination is ever exercised. The wicked do indeed meet death; and after all, life is better than death; for the dead know nothing, while the living at least know that they will die. All virtues and vices alike come to an end in the grave. Therefore, eat and drink with a glad heart and enjoy life with your beloved wife as long as you may. That is your portion in life. Live strenuously while you have the chance, for there is nothing to be done in Sheol (Eccles. 8:16—9:7, 10).

j) *Men are victims of chance and circumstance.* Moral desert plays no part in the determination of a man's lot. I saw this illustrated in the case of a small town that was besieged. A poor wise man could have saved the town, but men paid him no heed. So I observed that wisdom is better than might, even though a poor man's wisdom be not appreciated. Human society is upside down; slaves ride and princes walk. Happy is the land that has a mature and wise king and sober counselors. It is not safe to curse the mighty even in secret; for it is likely to be revealed and to cause trouble. A man's investments should be widely distributed; for one never knows what will happen; and some of them will probably prosper. No man knows the plans of God. We are all perfectly helpless in this regard. Nevertheless, this inevitable uncertainty must not be allowed to paralyze our efforts and the tasks of life must be faced bravely and philosophically; something is likely to succeed. It is good to be alive; and though we

live long, we may be glad all the way. But let us not forget the innumerable days of darkness (Eccles. 9:11–16; 10:4–7, 16–20; 11:1–8).

k) The proper procedure for a young man is that he should enjoy life while he is young, putting away all sorrow and trouble; for he will never be young again. Old age will come upon him with its blunting of the senses and crippling of the faculties. This in turn will lead to death. Then his flesh goes back to the earth as it was and his spirit shall return to God who gave it (Eccles. 11:9, 10; 12:2–7).

179. *Qoheleth's challenge.*—Many of Qoheleth's observations and conclusions challenge commonly accepted views; for example, his harsh judgment of human nature in general and of women in particular; his utterly utilitarian and hedonistic attitude toward the values of life; and the shrewd and calculating spirit with which he approaches the whole question of living. He represents practicality at its worst. On the other hand, Qoheleth serves a useful purpose in the Canon of Scripture. He stands for the right to investigate the deepest and most sacred problems of life. He holds that nothing is above criticism, that everything must show cause for its existence and be able to defend itself upon its merits. He is of great value, too, as a reminder of the necessity of reckoning with the hard facts of life. He serves as a check upon airy speculation and wild-eyed idealism. He insists upon keeping his feet upon the ground. He stresses the necessity of staying close to reality.

180. *Qoheleth's contribution.*—He is on the right track, likewise, in that he insists upon the need of an

ultimate value for life. He can see none; but this to him is the great tragedy of living. Are we getting anywhere? Is there any goal toward which our faces are set? Is mankind making any progress? Are we achieving any permanent values? Is the individual life worth a candle? Do we make any contribution to the enrichment of the world? To all such questions Qoheleth gives a negative answer. But he rendered a great service in raising them. He felt that such goals ought to be, and it is a great grief to him that so far as he can see they are not. He has no clearly formulated standard of value for human effort; but by implication, it would seem that he would demand for the individual some permanent impress for betterment upon the course of human life, so that man might not pass as the brute into an endless oblivion. Perhaps, too, he longed for a perpetuation of personality in a life beyond the grave; but of this he had no hope.

181. *Qoheleth's outlook* upon life is anything but inspiring. His general approach to the program of life is oriented by the conviction that life is lacking in the reach and outlook that would make it really worth while; but that even so, the thing to do is to make the best of a bad situation. Your sphere of influence and freedom is limited; but within those limitations, obtain what joy is available as you go along. But the limitations are not to any extent as oppressive as Qoheleth makes them out to be. Qoheleth thinks of man as a mere puppet upon the stage of a predetermined universe. Man has no freedom; he is utterly bound on a revolving wheel of circumstances. Such an interpretation of life involves complete paralysis of all aspiration, ambition,

and initiative in the field of ethics. It takes the snap out of life. Fortunately, such a view of life is not in accord with the facts of consciousness. We are all aware that it is in our power to choose our own course of action, that in any given situation we might have done differently, if we had so desired. Nothing is more clear to consciousness than this sense of inner freedom; and it is one of the most precious possessions of personality.

182. *Another defect in Qoheleth's theory* is that he has no historical perspective. His claim that there is nothing new in human experience, that man does not affect the course of history and the progress of civilization is in direct opposition to the facts of history. The world has grown better as it has grown older. Man has changed the environment of his life for good. The story of the centuries is a tale of progress and of continual change, and the greater part of this change and progress has been brought about directly and immediately by the efforts of men and women. The history of the world is by no means a record of constantly recurring and forever unvarying phenomena such as would discourage all endeavor at improvement; it is rather a record of repeated endeavor on the part of man to better his condition and of marvelous success in so doing; so that a knowledge of the achievements of man becomes a great stimulus toward a perpetuation of the same kind of endeavor.

183. *Lack of social interest.*—In one more important ethical aspect Qoheleth's interpretation of life is lacking; and that is in the total absence of any social outlook upon life. He is purely individualistic in all his interests. He does not relate himself in any way to the social

order; he is an unrelated individual. He manifests no altruistic elements; he makes no gestures of co-operation with his fellows. He has no place in the thought and action of the individual for the welfare and progress of his fellows. He has no conception of himself as a part of an ongoing stream of humanity which he may broaden and deepen by the contribution of his own personal endeavor. He thinks of himself simply as a helpless atom in a constantly revolving flux which carries him along and takes him nowhere, always coming back to the place whence it started. The conception of social progress apparently was foreign to his mind. He is a representative of individualism gone to seed. With all of his attention and energy focused upon himself, the fountains of his life-energy are stopped up; they lack all social outflow and he becomes a stagnant pool. This is one of the most conspicuously non-Jewish aspects of Qoheleth's teaching; for the Jew was essentially socially minded. He lived not only for himself but also for Jewry and its glory.

184. *The message of Canticles.*—As an antidote to Qoheleth's pessimism with reference to woman, we subjoin here a brief summary of the message of the Song of Songs. This book has a long and varied history of interpretation.[1] The oldest Christian view was that the book was an allegory, setting forth the love of Christ for his church. More recently it was held that the Song was a drama setting forth the story of the love of a man for a woman. Today the growing tendency is

[1] The best English commentaries on the Song of Songs are: Morris Jastrow, *The Song of Songs* (1921); Andrew Harper, *The Song of Solomon* (Cambridge Bible, 1902).

to regard it as a collection of love lyrics used at weddings. But a new and attractive interpretation has just been offered which would make it a body of liturgical poetry that had its origin in the worship of Tammuz, a worship which celebrated the marriage of the sun-god to the goddess of fertility, from which union results all the luxuriant life of budding nature in the spring.[1] The original Tammuz character was in due time eliminated and the Song came to be used in connection with spring celebrations as a part of the worship of Yahweh.

185. *The value of Canticles.*—Whatever may have been the original or final function of the Song, it is clear that it is a bit of rich lyric poetry that came right out of the heart of the masses in Jewry. Its central theme is love, and that the love between man and woman. It sounds somewhat sensuous, if not sensual, in our ears; but those who find in it only an orgy of erotic passion are blind to the beauty of its naïve and unconventionalized emotion. The Song reflects the force and passion of genuine love. It is a bright light amid the prevailing darkness of the Old Testament attitude toward woman. Elsewhere she is altogether too much the plaything, possession, and tool of man. Here she appears as a person in her own right. Here she is, at least, man's equal, not his slave. The relation between the sexes is upon a basis of equality of worth. The love between man and woman is not conceived of as a mere fleeting passion; it is rather a permanent and invincible attitude of mind and heart. The climax of the description of

[1] So T. J. Meek, "Canticles and the Tammuz Cult," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XXXIX (1922), 1–14.

the power of love in chapter 8:6, 7, is unsurpassed and perhaps, unsurpassable in literature:

> For strong as death is love,
> Unchangeable as Sheol is [its] passion;
> Its flames are flames of fire,
> A devouring fire.
> Many waters cannot quench love,
> Even rivers cannot sweep it away.
> If a man would give all the wealth of his house for love,
> They would utterly despise him.

CHAPTER XV

THE MORAL STANDARDS OF LEGALISM

186. *Priestly sources.*—We gather together in this chapter the materials that show the moral standards of the priestly school of editors and writers. Their literary products are represented by the P document in the Hexateuch, the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the Books of Chronicles. Their work was done pretty well along in the fourth century B.C. It will be recognized in advance that it is the nature of the priestly mind to be conservative and cling to the past. It will also be granted that the interest of the priestly mind is in ritual and tradition rather than in ethics. The prophet was the great protagonist of the ethical and he not infrequently found the priest in opposition to him, fighting for his ancient customs, institutions, and opinions. So we may not expect to find anything here but the traditional and orthodox note in matters relating to morals.

187. *Characteristics of the priestly sources.*—What we have in these documents is a re-writing of the old traditions, customs, and laws. The priestly scribes took the familiar materials that had come down from the past and got them out in new and revised editions. This is plentifully proven and illustrated by a comparison of the Books of Kings, for example, with the Books of Chronicles. Such a comparison reveals not only the fact that Chronicles is but a revision of the history as it appears in Kings, but also the spirit, point of view, and

purpose of that work of revision. It is a reinterpretation of the past from the point of view of the Chronicler's present, made for the purpose of forcefully illustrating by means of the past the importance of faithful and strict adherence to the ritual and principles held to be indispensable by the Chronicler and his priestly contemporaries. Their interests and hope did not move in the field of the moral, but in that of the ceremonial and legal. They were content to pass on the accepted moral standards of their time without enrichment. Their contribution was made along other lines.

188. *The old uncomplimentary estimate of woman* is found in these writers in full force. They record without protest or criticism the fact that polygamy was practiced in ancient Israel by its leading men. Abraham, David, Rehoboam, Abijah, Joash, and many others had two or more wives and yet come in for no rebuke.[1] This silence certainly implies approval, for the Chronicler is not slow to express disapproval when he is so minded. Naturally the estimate of woman was low and the restrictions placed upon her were severe. The mother of a girl was unclean after her daughter's birth twice as long as the mother of a boy and was likewise debarred from entering the sanctuary for twice as long a period (Lev. 12:2–5). A woman's market value was only a little more than one-half that of a man (Lev. 27:1–7). In the ordeal imposed upon complaint of a jealous husband the burden of taking the nasty dose is upon the suspected woman even though she be innocent (Num. 5:16–31). Apparently, she is presumed to be guilty until "proved" innocent! A

[1] I Chron. 1:32; 2:18, 26, 48; 3:1–3, 5–9; 4:5; 7:4, 14; 8:8; II Chron. 11:21; 13:21; 24:3; Gen. 16:1*a*; 26:34 f.; 28:8 f.; 36:1–5.

woman's vow is void unless approved by her husband or, if unmarried, her father. A widow may make a vow in her own right (Num. 30:1–16). No daughter may marry outside of her own tribe, because by so doing the inheritance of her tribe might be diminished (Num. 36:1–3). Such procedure takes no account of the woman's personality whatsoever. That is of no importance as compared with property interests.

189. *Jews are not under any obligation to foreigners.*— The Jew is immeasurably superior to them and must maintain that superiority by separating himself from them. There ought to be no intermarriage between Jew and non-Jew. The Jewish blood must be kept pure. So Ezra (9:1—10:44) is reported to have induced his contemporaries to put away their non-Jewish wives with their children. The same attitude of mind appears in Num. 25:6–18, where it is related that when an Israelite brought a Midianitish wife into the camp a plague broke out and slew 24,000 people before it was stopped by the killing of the offending couple. It appears also in II Chron. 24:26, where the narrative as it was presented in II Kings 12:21 suffers a slight but significant change, in that the assassins of Joash the king are made to have been sons of a Moabite woman and an Ammonite woman, respectively. Edom comes in for a full share of this hostility and hatred toward foreigners. In II Chron. 25:11–12, the narrative in Kings that Amaziah of Judah slew 10,000 Edomites in battle is augmented by the further statement that he captured another 10,000 and hurled them down headlong from the top of a cliff. Yet in I Chron. 2:34 f., a Jewish father is recorded as having given his daughter in mar-

riage to his Egyptian slave, and no blame is attached to the action.

The same exclusiveness is carried over into the field of religion. Moabites and Ammonites are permanently shut out from admission into the congregation of Yahweh (Neh. 13:1); and no foreigner is permitted to partake of the Passover (Exod. 12:43). The superiority of the Jew to the foreigner is brought out by the Chronicler in his records of the relations of Israel with foreign nations. Solomon ruled over all the kings of the earth and they brought him tribute year by year (II Chron. 9:22–24, 26). Philistines and Arabs likewise brought gifts to the good king Jehoshaphat (II Chron. 17:11, 12). The God-fearing Jews did not need to fight Moab and its allies; they merely "stood still and saw the deliverance of Yahweh," while their foes fell one upon another and killed themselves off (II Chron., chap. 20). King Asa of Judah is denounced for having called in Benhadad of Syria to his aid in his war with Northern Israel instead of having put his full trust in Yahweh (II Chron. 16: 1–4, 7).

190. *Attitude toward Northern Israel.*—This hostile attitude toward foreigners was likewise held toward Northern Israel. This was the home of the Samaritans and the Israelites were their ancestors. Consequently the Israelites are the victims of all the bitter enmity felt by the Jews toward the Samaritans. The history of Northern Israel is left out wherever possible, and when mentioned it is almost always for the purpose of condemnation.[1] Amaziah of Judah had hired Israelitish

[1] See I Chron. 5:25, 26; 10:13, 14; II Chron. 20:35–37; 21:6, 12–15, 18, 19; 22:7–9; 25:17–24.

mercenaries for a campaign and had paid them in advance; but upon the bidding of a prophet who prommised him his money back and greater gain from Yahweh, he sent them all back home unused (II Chron. 25:5–10). In the reign of Ahaz, Pekah of Israel, who had carried captive 200,000 women and children from Judah, was bidden by a prophet to return them to their homes and treat them with all kindness and consideration, lest Yahweh should smite Israel which already had too much sin to its account (II Chron. 28:9–15)! When Hezekiah invited Northern Israel to join in the celebration of the Passover at Jerusalem his messengers were laughed to scorn and mocked by the Israelites (II Chron. 30:10). In the days of Nehemiah, the Samaritans opposed and hindered him in every way as he set himself to the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem; and Nehemiah retaliated by calling down the vengeance of Yahweh upon them (Neh. 4:1–5; 6:1–14).

191. *In reckoning with the moral limitations* of this priestly element we must give full weight to the narrow, restrictive, and exclusive spirit in Judaism. This priestly literature perpetuates that spirit. In the days of Nehemiah and Ezra the narrow, sectarian, and particularistic elements in Judaism won the supremacy in the community's councils. Broad-minded patriots, such as gave utterance to the sentiments of the Book of Ruth, the story of Jonah, and certain parts of Isaiah, chapters 56–66, were then silenced. The right of way was given to these minds of a lower order. In the ethical narrowness and dulness of these priestly documents we see these strict and narrow-minded Jews at their worst. They were not wholly incapable of high idealism and

noble enthusiasm as we shall see in our next chapter. But their narrow and legalistic minds do not appear to advantage in the field of ethics.

192. *A traditional view.*—The old doctrine against which Job had so effectively protested, viz., that the pious prosper and the wicked suffer, is reaffirmed in these writings without any recognition of its incompleteness or inadequacy.[1] The flood was punishment for sin; the Exile was due to Israel's sin. The pious David prospered and died at an advanced age full of riches and honor. The good priest Jehoiada lived to be one hundred and thirty years old. A small Aramaean army was given victory over a large Jewish force on account of the wickedness of King Joash. The pious Nehemiah asks Yahweh's blessing in view of the fact that he has not used government funds for the maintenance of his establishment, but has spent his own money (Neh. 5:14–19). He counts confidently upon his various good deeds being entered to his credit upon the day-book of Yahweh. "Remember me, O my God, for this and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for the wards thereof" (Neh. 13:14; cf. 13:22*b*, 31*b*). But the good are kept humble by the thought that there are none without sin in the sight of God (II Chron. 6:36). Not only so, but concrete blessings of a materialistic sort, such as riches, honor, long life, and revenge upon foes, are held to be of a value inferior to that of more spiritual gifts. Hence Solomon who asked only for these latter is given all. The richest blessings

[1] See Gen. 6:11–13; I Chron. 2:3; 4:41; 9:1; 11:9; 22:11, 13; 28:7; 29:28; II Chron. 6:36–39; 7:17–22; 17:5; 24:20–25; 26:5–21; 27:6; 28:1–5, 19–21.

are the possession of wisdom and knowledge (II Chron. 1:10–12).

193. *Breaches of the moral law.*—Amid the many demands of the priestly and ritualistic interest, it would not have been strange if the requirements of ethics had received no notice. But attention is called to some breaches of the moral law and its claims are enforced. Intertribal wars are wrong (II Chron. 11:1–4). Blood-revenge is imperative in its demands; but cities of refuge are provided for the accidental homicide.[1] The foreclosure of mortgages held by rich Jews upon the lands, goods, and persons of poor Jewish debtors was vehemently denounced by Nehemiah, who demanded the remission of such debts; and his demands were granted (Neh. 5:1–13). Among the sins penalized in the priestly law are misuse of funds deposited for safekeeping; hard bargains; robbery; oppression; retention of lost articles by a finder who lies and swears falsely regarding his find; failure to tell the whole truth in your possession if called into court as a witness; and swearing to do something which turns out to be an evil thing (Lev. 6:1–7; 5:1, 4). It is the duty of a king to enforce justice and righteousness (II Chron. 9:8). Judges act not for men, but as the representatives of God; hence there must be no iniquity in their decisions, no respect of persons, no bribery (II Chron. 19:5–9). God himself is the supreme judge and in the last resort will discriminate between the righteous and the wicked in the taking of oaths (II Chron. 6:22–23).

194. *The non-ethical in general and the ritualistic* in particular are so enlarged upon and emphasized as to

[1] Gen. 9:5, 6; Num. 35:9–34; Josh. 20:7–9.

imperil the right evaluation of the ethical by the masses. All Israel swears to put to death any Jew that will not "seek Yahweh" (II Chron. 15:12–15). Sin may be committed "unwittingly," i.e., without knowing or intending it. The whole congregation of Israel may commit such sin and become "guilty." Even to touch an "unclean" thing unwittingly is to become "guilty."[1] The violation of the Sabbath is a capital offense; even so slight a labor as picking up a few sticks is punished by death.[2] Death is inflicted upon the one who eats the flesh of the peace-offering when unclean; eats fat, or drinks blood; touches the sanctuary when helping to transport it; or fails to keep the Passover if at home at the time and if ritually "clean."[3] Nadab and Abihu were slain by fire from Yahweh because they offered incense of strange fire; and Yahweh was so incensed by their conduct that he was liable to blaze forth in fiery wrath upon the whole congregation (Lev. 10:1 ff.). Upon another occasion the anger of Yahweh, which impresses us as somewhat childish, was assuaged and halted in its destructive course by the interposition of Moses and Aaron with incense, but not until it had already slain 14,700 members of the congregation (Num. 16:41–50). When a thing has been set aside for Yahweh under the ban, it may not be withdrawn; even a man under such circumstances cannot be redeemed –he must be put to death (Lev. 27:27–29). Such a law presupposes and recognizes the right of one man or a group of men to dispose of another man's life. Probably the victim

[1] Lev. 4:2, 13, 22, 27; 5:2, 15, 17, 18; Num. 15:24, 26, 27 f.

[2] Exod. 16:22–30; 31:14; Num. 15:32–36.

[3] Lev. 7:19–27; Num. 4:15, 20; 9:13.

contemplated was a slave or a captive; and probably, likewise, such a law was never actually enforced.

With reference to these non-ethical regulations two things are notable. First, that there is a great disregard of the rights of personality and even of human life itself. Secondly, that these death penalties are imposed prevailingly for ritualistic derelictions. The penalties for the violation or neglect of ritual are on the whole much more severe than those imposed upon violations of the moral law. This is in keeping with the whole spirit of the priestly writers and lawmakers, in that breaches of the moral law are primarily offenses against man, whereas violations of the laws of ritual were thought of as sins against God himself, and so far more heinous.

195. *A certain lack of keen ethical insight* is seen in the deliberate perversion and misrepresentation of fact so characteristic of these priestly writers, and especially of the Chronicler. There is a notable disregard for the exact truth, a too easy-going attitude toward historical sources, a failure to recognize the importance of a knowledge of the facts. There is no more dangerous proceeding than to treat history disrespectfully and to wrest it violently from its true meaning. History is mankind's greatest teacher. But its lessons are lost if we fail to listen to its utterances with close attention and respect. The actual facts of history are in the long run more instructive and helpful to the succeeding generations than any wrong interpretation that anybody can temporarily impose upon them. But the priestly writers did not merely misinterpret history; they destroyed it, and substituted a new record of their own making, supplying both the facts and the interpretation thereof.

196. *The legalistic attitude* of the priestly school of writers was that which came to dominate the life of later Judaism as a whole. It found its logical fulfilment in Pharisaism, which has, of course, been too harshly judged. But the legalistic mind sought to secure the divine favor by a literalistic obedience to every detail of the divine will as formulated in the law. This law was expanded and interpreted to fit and cover every aspect of life. Salvation meant conformity to every jot and tittle. But such an attitude is that of a slave, rather than a free man. It represents a cramping of the spirit, a throttling of life. It is death to all liberty of thought and all spontaneity of life. It substitutes an external authority for an inner spirit. It kills the creative mind. It substitutes fetters for wings.

In small matters there is some advance beyond the earlier records on the part of these later writers. In I Chron. 2:4, there is no mention of Tamar's strategy in ensnaring Judah. In the story of the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem, David is provided with decent clothing (I Chron. 15:27). The Bathsheba episode is entirely omitted from David's life-story. In the account of David's census of all Israel, Satan is made to come in and displace Yahweh in bearing the responsibility for moving David to commit this great sin (I Chron. 21:1).

In this chapter we have met the priestly spirit on its lower levels; in the next, we shall find it in its highest outreachings and shall come to see how great things can be done and can be endured by people of limited outlook when doing their best.

CHAPTER XVI

A STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

197. *Life in Palestine* during the first half of the second century B.C. was fraught with interest and danger for the Jewish people. They were under the necessity of submission to a series of changing rulers, all of whom were chiefly concerned with extracting money from their subjects that they might be able to finance their continual wars. But with the accession of Antiochus IV (175 B.C.), the situation became acute and the tyranny of the master more and more intolerable. Antiochus organized an expedition against Egypt in 173 B.C. and got as far as Alexandria, to which he laid siege. But he was unable to push this to a successful issue on account of disturbed conditions in Syria, whither he hastened back. On the way he paused long enough to go up to Jerusalem and plunder the temple, killing many of the leading citizens.

198. *The situation in Jerusalem* gave him an ostensible pretext for this procedure. There had long been there a sharp diversion of sentiment that had split the people into two factions. Alexander's program for the Hellenization of the Orient had been continued by his successors and had found many adherents in Judea itself. Those who were faithful to the old Jewish ideals had become more zealous in their defense as they saw them imperiled by advancing Hellenism. Hence the community was divided between the Hellenists and the loyalists. Antiochus IV found the former willing adherents to his policy

of Hellenization and co-operated with them. Onias, the High Priest, who was naturally a supporter of strict Judaism, was displaced early in the new reign by Jason, a Hellenistic Jew, who bribed Antiochus to appoint him High Priest, promising him heavier tribute and a vigorous program of Hellenization. In accordance with this, a gymnasium was built close by the temple, and the Greek games there carried on attracted many of the priests themselves to a participation in them. Many Jews who took up with the new life sought to protect themselves from ridicule by undergoing an operation for the removal of the mark of circumcision. The two opposing groups of the faithful and the Hellenizers came to blows, and Onias was forced to flee to Egypt for safety. But Jason was in turn deposed from, and succeeded in, the High Priesthood, which was now for sale to the highest bidder, by Menelaus, who offered a larger bribe. Jason sought to recover his office by force and succeeded in imprisoning Menelaus while Antiochus was campaigning in Egypt. These proceedings furnished an excuse for the visit of Antiochus to Jerusalem and his drastic treatment of the city.

199. *The Maccabaean revolt.*—Two years later Antiochus was turned back from another attempt to conquer Egypt by a Roman legate who forbade his further progress under the penalty of the hostility of the Imperial City. Upon his return Antiochus gave orders for a most rigorous treatment of the Jews. They were forbidden to practice circumcision upon pain of death to all concerned. The reading of the Hebrew Scriptures was proscribed, and orders given to destroy such writings wherever found. Observance of the Sabbath was pro-

hibited. The offerings and sacrifices in the temple were brought to an end. In short, the king sought to banish the worship of Yahweh from the land and to establish the cults of the Greek gods in its place. The crowning insult was the erection of a Greek altar upon the top of the altar of Yahweh in the temple and the sacrifice of swine and other unclean things thereupon. This is Daniel's "abomination of desolation." Many of the faithful suffered death rather than to be disloyal to their most holy faith. Finally, Mattathias, a priest, slew a renegade Jew who stepped forward to sacrifice upon the Greek altar at Modin. He thereupon slew the king's officer, leveled the pagan altar to the ground, and then took to the hills with his five sons. More and more of like mind gathered about them and the Maccabaean revolt was on.[1] It was to hearten and sustain the pious while they were passing through such terrific trials that the writings we take up in this chapter were prepared. They were campaign documents. They were to build up and maintain the morale of a small group of faithful Jews fighting against tremendous odds for the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience.

200. *The story of Esther.*—One way to furnish inspiration and to stimulate courage was to tell stories of the wonderful deeds of Yahweh in days gone by in behalf of his hard-pressed people. If he had intervened thus marvelously in order to deliver those who were loyal to him in the past, could he not be depended upon to do the same thing again in these days when his loyal people

[1] The source of our information for this state of affairs is I Maccabees, chaps. 1 and 2.

are oppressed beyond endurance? This kind of literature is seen at its worst ethically in the Book of Esther.[1] Queen Vashti refuses to present herself before her drunken lord and master, valuing the dignity of her own person too highly to permit herself to be made the plaything of a drunken court. This insubordination is punished by her ejection from her exalted position. The motive for this severe punishment is that a proper example may be set to other wives in order that husbands may not become contemptible in the eyes of their wives. This attributes to the Persians a conception of the subordination of wives to husbands that was all too well known among the Jews themselves. The removal of Vashti opens the way for the rise of the Jewess Esther to the supreme honor available to women in that day. To Esther comes the great opportunity of serving and saving her own people. The wicked Haman has obtained from the king a decree authorizing the slaughter of all Jews throughout the empire. Mordecai, Esther's uncle, adjures Esther to intercede for her own people, saying unto her, "Who knows but that thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther accepts the responsibility and undertakes to present herself before the King even though she thereby imperils her life, saying, "If I perish, I perish." This is the highest ideal in the book; and it is embodied in the act and attitude of a woman. She is willing to lose her life in an attempt to save her people's life.

201. *The downfall of Haman.*—At this point a brief interlude is permitted in which Haman, the bitter

[1] The best English commentary on Esther is that by Lewis B. Paton in the *International Critical Commentary.*

enemy of the Jews, meets his proper fate, and Mordecai is given the highest honors. The king is represented as cleverly leading Haman on to name the honors that shall be showered upon Mordecai on the supposition that he is naming honors to be bestowed upon himself. But when he has named all the things that he covets for himself, he finds himself asked to bestow them upon Mordecai, the Jew. Not only so, but charges are preferred against Haman that lead him to plead with Esther for protection. At this juncture Ahasuerus appears and is enraged by Haman's conduct so that he decrees that he be hung. The last touch to this bit of poetic justice is given in the fact that Haman is hung upon the gallows he had himself ordered built for the Jew, Mordecai.

202. *The main theme of the story* is now brought to a conclusion. Esther and Mordecai procure from Ahasuerus a decree to offset the earlier edict that decreed the destruction of the Jews. This new decree authorizes the Jews to defend themselves against their enemies who were bent upon their extermination. So the Jews armed themselves and upon the day decreed for their slaughter they set upon their foes and cut them down ruthlessly, the fear of Mordecai, now in the highest place of power, having fallen upon all the peoples.

203. *Purpose of the Book of Esther.*—This story, which is wholly lacking in historical basis of fact, is full of race prejudice, national hatred, and revenge. But it served the purpose of stirring up the national and religious loyalty of the Jews and helped to strengthen their faith in the goodness and power of their God. The story in its present form was probably not written down until toward the last third of the second century B.C., after

the Maccabaean struggle had succeeded. But it reflects the feelings of the faithful in that struggle and immediately thereafter; and shows that Judaism knew how to hate wholeheartedly.

204. *The Book of Daniel.*—Another bit of story-telling literature from this same general period, which served to hearten the faithful in the Maccabaean struggle, is found in Daniel, chapters 1–6.[1] These stories tell of men being loyal to their ideals at the peril of their lives and of their being sustained in their idealism and gloriously vindicated by the power of God. Daniel and his three friends, for example, when chosen to go into training for high positions in the Babylonian court, refuse to defile themselves by eating of the food and drink provided by the king. They requested that they be put upon a diet of pulse and water and, notwithstanding this scant fare, at the end of the training period they were found to be "ten times better" both in physical condition and in mental attainments than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all the king's realm. The value of such a story in a period when the government was insisting upon the disregard of all Jewish dietary laws is at once evident.

205. *The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego* and the Fiery Furnace is another case in point. Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image and decreed that all men should worship it at stated times. The three youths

[1] The best English commentaries on the Book of Daniel are those by S. R. Driver (Cambridge Bible, 1900), R. H. Charles (New Century Bible), A. A. Bevan (1892), and J. D. Prince (1899). It is more than probable that the stories in Dan., chaps. 1–6, were in circulation a century or two before the Maccabaean period, though the present Book of Daniel is a Maccabaean product.

are accused of failure to obey this decree and are summoned before the king. When he threatens them with death by fire if they persist in their refusal to bow down before his idol they reply to the effect that even if their God should not deliver them from this awful death, nevertheless, "be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not worship thy god, and we will not bow down to the golden image which thou hast set up." After this there is nothing for the king to do but to carry out his threat. The furnace is heated seven times hotter than usual, so hot, indeed, that as the men cast in the three youths, they themselves are slain by the heat. Yet Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego suffer no harm from the flames, not even was the hair of their heads singed; their bonds only were burned, allowing them to walk about freely in the glowing furnace. The king cries out in amazement as he sees *four* men in the furnace and the appearance of the fourth like that of a divine being. The youths are given their liberty and a decree made that their God must be treated with reverence upon pain of death to all offenders. The bearing of such a story is at once apparent when we recall that Antiochus decreed death to all who should fail to sacrifice and worship before the Greek gods.

206. *Daniel and the lions.*—Of similar aim and purport is the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den. Darius the king made a decree that for the next thirty days no one could worship or pray to any god save the king himself, on pain of being cast to the lions. Daniel continued to pray three times a day kneeling down before his open window as his custom was. This disobedience is at once reported to Darius and he is forced,

notwithstanding his liking for Daniel, to order his commitment to the lions' den. After a bad night, due to his troubled conscience, Darius goes early in the morning to the den and to his astonishment and joy finds Daniel alive and unharmed. Thereupon Daniel is released and the men who had accused him are cast into the lions' den together with their wives and children, and before they had so much as reached the bottom of the den they were torn in pieces by the hungry beasts. Darius then decrees that the entire kingdom of Persia "tremble and fear before the God of Daniel." It must be noted here that at so late a period as this—the middle of the second century B.C.—the ethical conscience of the Jew found no offense in the thought of revenge upon the foes of Judaism and did not revolt against involving innocent women and children in the punitive fate of their husbands and fathers. The old sense of family solidarity was still deeply rooted.

207. *The purpose of apocalyptic writings.*—Alongside of this story-telling literature, there was current an entirely different kind that had the same aim, viz., to keep up the morale of Judaism in times of stress and strain. This is known as Apocalyptic Literature. Typical examples of it are the Book of Enoch and the last six chapters of Daniel. The method and purpose of such literature are readily discernible. The writers seek to bring encouragement, with renewed and invigorating faith, to their contemporaries living in troublous and terrible times. They despair of any help from man against the overwhelming forces of evil arrayed in opposition to the righteous; but they look forward confidently to a miraculous intervention by God in behalf of his

pious children. They seek to strengthen their struggling and well-nigh fainting brethren by imparting to them something of the same faith and hope that fill their own souls. The common method of doing this is to select some ancient worthy, like Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, or Daniel, and make him the mouthpiece of a revelation from God. Such an one from ancient times is represented as having received from God in advance an account of the course of later history and as having put this predictive narrative on record. It is now brought to light, after centuries in hiding, that it may hearten the faithful in their great trial. It presents a great series of world-pictures, beginning at some point in the actual past, not only portraying the course of world-history as it has thus far actually developed, but also passing on from the known present into the unknown future. This future always holds in store for the pious a sure deliverance and a glorification. The argument is to the effect that since the ancient seer's prediction of the course of history has been fulfilled up to the present time, he ought on all counts to be given confidence and trust in reference to his predictions regarding the still unknown future. The fundamental conviction lying behind all such literature is that this is a moral universe and under the control of the God of the Jews; therefore Judaism and its adherents must in the very nature of things receive vindication and glorification at the hands of its God in the immediate future. A good and God-fearing people cannot be forever ruthlessly trampled into the dust by its foes with impunity.

208. *The Book of Enoch.*—The two products of the apocalyptic mind that belong to the Old Testament

period are the earlier portions of the Book of Enoch and the latter half of the Book of Daniel. We turn to the Book of Enoch first. The parts of Enoch that may with reasonable assurance be assigned to the period before and during the Maccabaean revolt are chapters 6–36 and 83–90. It may also be that 93:1–10 and 91:12–17 should be assigned to this same general period.[1] There is not much of detail in the field of morals in these chapters. But what little there is calls for consideration. For the first time in Hebrew thought the task of moral discrimination is carried over into the region beyond the grave. There the good and the bad are reckoned with according to their deserts. In Sheol the departed spirits are classified under three categories (Enoch 22:8–14). These are (1) the righteous, (2) sinners who are not judged while living, who are to continue till the great day of judgment, and (3) sinners who received some punishment in the form of suffering while they were upon earth. The final judgment mentioned is to take place in the "valley of the accursed" (27:2), and is to take place at the end of the last ten weeks. In the eighth week "*all mankind* shall look to the path of righteousness." In the ninth week "the righteous judgment shall be revealed to the whole world." "All the works of the godless shall vanish from all the earth; and the world shall be written down for destruction."

> And after this in the tenth week in the seventh part,
> There shall be the great eternal judgment,
> In which He will execute vengeance amongst the angels;
> And the first heaven shall depart and pass away,
> And a new heaven shall appear,

[1] So R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.*

And all the powers of the heavens shall give sevenfold light,
And after that will be many weeks without number for ever.
And all shall be in goodness and righteousness,
And sin shall no more be mentioned for ever
[Enoch 91:15–17].

209. *Such words reveal the prevailing characteristic of Apocalypticism.*—The seer despairs of humanity. It has no power to renovate itself. It is hopelessly enmeshed in the toils of evil, and cannot lift itself to the higher moral levels. Nevertheless, the seers do not despair of their ideals. These must arrive. Therefore they count upon God to enforce them. The power of God will achieve that which surpassed the strength of mere men. They are firmly convinced of the justice of God; and with unshakable faith and resolution they wait for its manifestation among men. They call upon the divine world to supplement the defects of the present world and they bear the pains and disappointments of the dispensation that now is in hope of sharing the triumph and blessedness of an age to come when all existing wrongs shall be righted.

210. *The last six chapters of Daniel* approach the problem of the vindication of the righteous people of God in the same way. They represeent the seer Daniel as having lived in the period of the Exile and as having received from God a series of visions in which he is shown pictorially the succeeding course of history, commencing with his own day and continuing through the Maccabaean struggle until its consummation in the Kingdom of God, which is to be manifested and estab-

lished upon earth in the days immediately following the writer's own time. It is noteworthy that the record of the history of the earlier postexilic age is rather vague and at times inaccurate, but that the events immediately preceding the Maccabaean revolt are detailed with considerable minuteness, while the immediate future is again vague and general and not entirely in accord with the history which actually developed.

211. *The future life.*—One detail of the writer's expectation has ethical value. He is looking forward to the vindication and glorification of the pious Jewish nation. This is to come without delay. But the reward to be received by those who have engaged in the present life-and-death struggle for their ideals and have survived to share the hoped-for blessings belongs rightfully also to those who underwent similar trials and dangers in days of the near and more distant past and are not now alive to share in the joys of the coming kingdom. They earned their reward as fully as any of the existing generation and they ought not to be deprived of it. Therefore, the writer of Daniel leaps to the conclusion that they too will share in the coming vindication of the pious and that to that end they will be restored to life upon earth.

> And at that time thy people shall be delivered,
> Every one that is found written in the book.
> And many of those that sleep in the dust of the ground
> shall awake,
> Some to life eternal,
> And others to reproaches, to eternal horror.
> But the wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament,
> And those that justify many
> Like the stars for ever and aye [Dan. 12:1–3].

This is the first and only occurrence in the Old Testament proper of the thought that moral discriminations are carried beyond the grave. It takes for granted the view that piety is not necessarily rewarded in the life that now is in any tangible and satisfactory way; and it seeks to find compensation for the suffering of the present in the glories of the future. Piety must be worth while; if it does not yield full satisfaction on the spot, deferred payments may be anticipated in a future existence. The doctrine that "virtue is its own reward" did not wholly satisfy the Apocalyptists. The reason for this lay partly in the fact that they were too materialistic in their outlook upon life; but they were also jealous for the reputation of God among men in general. This consideration demanded a public manifestation in unmistakable terms of the divine justice, that all men might see and know that God punishes wickedness and rewards virtue. It thus appears that the doctrine of a bodily resurrection of the dead was to a large extent born out of a moral passion that set death at naught in the effort to find satisfaction for its own needs. Both the future life and the belief in monotheism in Israel found their strongest support on ethical grounds.

Daniel does not anticipate a universal resurrection. Not all the dead will arise, but "many" will. This is not a carefully and systematically thought-out view of the future. It is but a fragment of an unknown universe, which the mind of this explorer had not as yet traversed.

212. *The lack of the historical spirit.*—One other aspect of this apocalyptic literature requires consideration from the point of view of ethics. As has been observed, the theory of such books as Daniel is that the ancient author

received a revelation of the course of history from his own day on to the coming of the final Golden Age. The force of the argument is to the effect that this revelation has been fulfilled up to the present hour as any student of history may know; therefore, the picture of the immediate future should also be accepted and given full credence. This raises two questions in the mind of the modern man. First, would the pious public at large readily accept such representations? Second, how did the writers themselves think of their own work? Were they not deliberately making false claims for their books, giving them an antiquity and a special divine authority to which they could lay no rightful claim? In answer to the first question, it need only be said that by the second century B.C. no such thing as a sober, critical attitude toward life in general and ancient history in particular had as yet arisen anywhere in the world. People were all too ready to believe marvelous and miraculous tales without asking for credentials. The passion for accuracy and for fidelity to fact so characteristic of the modern historical method was practically unknown in the ancient world. The "history" recorded by Herodotus is an excellent illustration of this lack of critical scholarship. Nor ought we to be surprised at it when we recall the avidity with which the European public seized upon all sorts of wild rumors during the recent war and the popularity and credence accorded such stories as that of the intervention of the angelic bowmen in behalf of the British on the tragic retreat from Mons.

213. *The idealism of the apocalyptic writers.*—The second question is not so easily answered. Of course,

the writers of these apocalyptic visions expected them to be taken at their face value. There would have been no point in telling such tales if they had not expected and intended them to be believed. But more than that, they must have believed their tales themselves. They were men of high moral character and devoted to the defense of lofty spiritual and moral ideals. They were willing and ready to die if need be for their principles. It is inconceivable that they should have been anything less than wholeheartedly sincere in their statements. They were not trying to "put over" upon their contemporaries what they themselves knew to be a tissue of lies. They believed in themselves and in their message. How could they? Many elements enter into the answer to this question; and, of course, the explanation would not be the same in every individual case. At least, the proportions of the ingredients of the answer would vary with the individual. But the main formative factors may be stated. The lack of a keenly critical spirit in that generation has already been mentioned. This means that the lines between fact and fiction were not sharply drawn. The primary interest of these writers was not to discover actual facts and to discriminate clearly between truth and error; it was rather to edify and stimulate their readers to deeds and lives of heroism in behalf of their faith. Their first question, therefore, was not, "Is it true?" but "Will it serve my purpose?" Moreover, these writers were the exponents and champions of a highly idealistic interpretation of life and of the universe. Their whole being was wrapped up in their ideals; and ideals were immeasurably dearer to them than cold-blooded facts. It is always easy for

the genuine idealist to transcend facts; and this indifference to reality is always the greatest peril of idealism. Still further, these writers were endowed with rich and fertile imaginative powers. To these they gave loose rein. They roamed at will in the realms of the unreal and the fantastic and added to their store of materials much that was produced by their own creative imaginations. Furthermore, the apocalyptists carried on to an even greater intensity the old prophetic belief in a supernaturalistic universe. They substituted supernaturalism for natural law. In a very real sense, the supernatural was for them the natural thing. The Supernatural Person in control of the universe was free to express himself as he would. He was bound by no laws of matter or energy. In such a world the extraordinary is taken for granted. It is a matter of course. There is nothing inherently incredible. When we add to these things a profoundly emotional nature coupled with a mystical temperament, we get a combination that represents the personality of a saintly seer. Such a man brooding over the problem of the world and communing with his own inner spirit in dark and solitary places would easily become the victim of a kind of self-hypnosis which would render him incapable of distinguishing clearly between the fermentations of his own mind and the product of a divine revelation. He longs for a word from God and the word comes. He does not dream of questioning its authenticity or authority. Parallel cases in modern times are represented by the names of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon movement; Mrs. Eddy, the mother of the Christian Science community; and John Alexander Dowie, the

father of Zionism. These and others of the same sort are not to be thought of as unmitigated frauds; they are better understood if regarded as in large measure, at least, sincere, but self-deluded. Even as they impressed large numbers of people with their spiritual power and left vigorous religious groups behind them, so likewise the apocalyptic writers found a large and devoted following and helped the faithful tide over a trying period in their history.

214. *The moral heroism of Judaism.*—The Maccabaean revolt, pushed through to a successful issue despite tremendous difficulties and deadly dangers, is convincing proof of the underlying moral heroism of the loyal Jews. They entitled themselves the *Chasidim;* i.e., the pious. They were the product of the legalistic and particularistic school of thought and life, which interpreted religion and morals in extremely strict, narrow, and pietistic ways. But they made a great contribution to the history of humanity by saving their religion at peril of their lives. This attests the possession of an underlying moral stamina that is beyond all praise. Such men made spiritual and moral values supreme and ventured all their possessions and hopes in their defense. "They counted not their lives dear unto themselves." Christianity and modern Judaism represent the perpetuation of another aspect of Jewish life and thought, viz., the universal brotherhood of such writings as Ruth and Jonah. But had not the Maccabaean saints fought their good fight, there would have been nothing left with which to carry on the noble tradition, and the religious history of the world would have suffered incalculable loss.

CHAPTER XVII

SOME CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

215. *Morals and religion.*—In looking back over the long history of Hebrew morals, some general considerations stand out clearly. With a brief statement of these we bring our discussion to a close. They need no elaboration here, having been already suggested and illustrated in the foregoing historical record.

The relation between morals and religion is everywhere evident. Morals cannot be thought of apart from religion; the two are inseparable. The sanction and authority for morals are always furnished by religion. Yahweh was thought of as the giver of both the moral and the religious law. The moral law was a part of the religious law. The value of this was that it placed the whole power of religion at the disposal of the moral interests.

216. *Morals and ritual.*—The two main elements in Hebrew religion were morals and ritual. These two were never congenial partners. In the early centuries the ritualistic element bulked largest in Hebrew religion and small room was left for ethics. But the expansive power of the moral principle could not be kept down, and in the time of the great prophets it made for itself a large place. The notable and characteristic feature of this progress is that it was not made outside of the scope of religion and then later taken up by religion and incorporated into itself; but that it was developed within the limits of religion itself in the name and under the auspices

of religion. This moral enrichment was an achievement of the religious spirit. After the passing of the prophets, the ritualists once more took the reins; but the progress made under prophetic control was never lost. Indeed, the highest levels of moral attainment as reflected in the literature were not reached until later times, as appears from such materials as Mic. 6:6–8 and the Book of Job.

217. *The idea of God.*—One of the clearest indications of the growth of moral ideals is furnished by the history of the idea of God. In the earliest documents, Yahweh is represented as inspiring and doing many things that shock our sense of ethical fitness. He stirs up David to take a census and then punishes Israel with plagues because the census was taken. He hardens Pharaoh's heart so that he cannot respond to proper motives and then punishes him and his people for not responding. He inspires Ahab's prophets to tell him a lie, as a result of which Ahab plunges into war and meets his death on the battlefield. He favors his followers even when they are in the wrong and punishes the citizens of other nations when they have done no wrong. He wades through blood to the achievement of his purposes. But as the decades glide past they leave more and more of ethical deposit behind; and ultimately all this is taken up by the God-idea which becomes ethically rich. Satan comes in to relieve Yahweh of a portion of the responsibility for the presence of sin in human life. The idea of falsehood becomes loathsome to Yahweh, so that a curse is pronounced upon everyone "that loveth and maketh a lie." Job's indignation is stirred by the thought that anyone should dream of

flattering God by saying of him or his work that which is not true:

> Will you speak unrighteously for God,
> And talk deceitfully for him?
> Will you show him favour?
> Will you contend for God?
> Would it be good that he should search you out?
> Or as one mocks a man will you mock him?
> He will surely reprove you,
> If you do secretly show favour [Job 13:7–10].

A late prophet addresses Yahweh as one who cannot tolerate the sight of evil:

> Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil,
> And that canst not look upon wickedness [Hab. 1:13].

The terrible and destructive nature of Yahweh is softened down in the course of time to the point where he would rather save than destroy:

> I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,
> But that the wicked turn from his way and live;
> Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways,
> For why will ye die, O house of Israel [Ezek. 33:11]?

Justice and mercy developed side by side among the Hebrews and their progress was constantly reflected in the development of the thought of God. These two principles acted as mutually corrective agencies, so that neither grew to undue proportions at the expense of the other. It is a large part of the glory of the God-idea in Israel that it incorporated both justice and mercy within itself and so became a mighty influence toward moral progress.

218. *The motive of the moral life.*—The growth of the moral sense in Israel is revealed again in the development

of the ethical motive. In the early days, the motive was almost exclusively utilitarian. Men were deterred from the doing of evil by fear of the consequences in the form of direct chastisements of various sorts from Yahweh. The prophets continually urge their contemporaries on toward goodness by urging them to forsake their evil ways and flee from the wrath to come; and by holding before them glowing pictures of the success and prosperity that are in store for the righteous people. Nowhere is this method of teaching more clearly and constantly used than in the Book of Deuteronomy. This method of approach to the ethical problem persisted all through Hebrew history and is found clearly stated over and over again in such books as Psalms, Proverbs, Chronicles, and Daniel. But here and there men were coming to a deeper appreciation of goodness. In Job we are given the picture of a righteous man who holds on to his integrity in spite of the fact that he fails to receive the expected rewards of the righteous and on the contrary is overwhelmed by fortunes such as were properly the lot of the wicked. The book clearly recognizes that external fortune is by no means a safe guide in the judgment of a man's character. It is, on the contrary, the conviction of its author that there is no necessary connection between character and fortune. The good man will persist in his goodness even when it does not pay the coveted material rewards. There is such a thing as disinterested piety; Job is good for goodness' sake. The same advanced attitude toward the worth of goodness is attested by the Psalm of Habakkuk (3:17, 18), a later supplement to the Book of Habakkuk. Here the poet declares his intention and

resolve to continue in the path of piety even though the customary returns for such a life are not forthcoming. The spiritual character of the ethical motive is particularly noteworthy when we bear in mind the fact that there was no generally accepted belief in a worth-while life beyond the grave. It is measurably easy to struggle and endure in behalf of the true and the right, if such hard experiences are softened by a lively expectation of a glory in the hereafter that shall help us to view the sufferings of the present, which are but for a moment and not grievous, as not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be hereafter. But a goodness which persists through good report and ill report, without any external support derived from a future hope, is a type of virtue not to be lightly thought of, but to be classed among the great achievements of the race.

219. *The social aspect of Hebrew morals* is another thing deserving special emphasis. The Hebrews came into Canaan directly from the nomadic life of the desert. In that stage of experience the clan and tribe were the controlling forces in the life of the people. The interests of each were in a very real sense the interests of all. They all prospered and suffered together. Upon entering Canaan the old clan life rapidly disintegrated under the influences of the economic and political struggle for existence that was entered upon there. The old bonds relaxed. More and more it became a relentless competitive scramble in which each must look out for himself; and woe to the weakest! Against this increasing tendency the great prophets lifted their voices. They pleaded earnestly and eloquently the cause of the poor and the weak, and denounced passionately and fearlessly

the oppression and extortion practiced by the rich and the strong. Their words were treasured by the pious in Israel and continue to be an inspiration toward social justice amid the whirl and clash of machinery in our own industrial age. This social interest did not cease in Israel with the passing of the prophets, but continued to the end, as is seen from the fact that the pictures of the messianic future are always drawn in terms of community life and not in those of personal and individual experience.

220. *The development of the sense of individual value.*— An interesting story of the development of Hebrew ethics is the record of the rise of the sense of individual worth and responsibility. As suggested above, the emphasis in the nomadic life was upon the tribal, clan, and family interests. This emphasis only gradually gave way to the interests of the individual after the Hebrews entered Canaan. In the early centuries of life in Palestine, it is a common thing to find it recorded that the nation or the group suffered punishment from Yahweh for the sins of some member of the group. David sins and Israel suffers the consequences. The fathers sin and the children are punished. One section of Israel goes astray and all Israel must pay the price. This sense of the solidarity of the Hebrew people was of inestimable value in the re-enforcement it brought to the claims of social justice. The terrible consequences to the nation as a whole of social sin on the part of the leaders, the rich, and the powerful were continually urged upon the attention of the people by the great prophets. But the forces of life as organized in civilized agricultural and commercial communities finally brought

the individual to the front and secured for him full recognition. The specialization that is a necessary feature of civilized life worked in many ways toward the emergence of individual worth. The mystical experience of the prophet set him apart from other men as a marked man. The organization of the standing army ignored clan and family lines and was upon a frankly individualistic basis. The town life, with its arts and crafts, its competition in trade and commerce, and its inevitable recognition of exceptional men and women, worked effectively to push the individual into the foreground. The ownership of land passed rapidly from the communal to an individualistic basis. The great tragedy of the Exile finally broke down completely the old-time solidarity, in that the exiles were not chosen on the basis of clan or family relationships, but rather because of their influence and strength as individuals in the community; so that Ezekiel, living among the exiles in Babylonia, was the first to make a clear and insistent statement of the position that a man's treatment by Yahweh was determined not upon the basis of his parents' deserts, but solely in accordance with his own merits as an individual.[1]

221. *Rise of a world outlook.*—Closely related to the rise of the sense of individual worth and responsibility was the corresponding development from a nationalistic and particularistic outlook upon life to a point of view that was general and universal. In the early periods the attitude toward foreigners was for the most part one of hostility and fear. In no case did the Hebrew

[1] See J. M. Powis Smith, *The Prophet and His Problems* (1914), pp. 168–208.

feel any responsibility for or obligation toward other nations or the members of such nations. The Hebrew nation was the chosen people of Yahweh who could be counted upon to defend his own against all comers. The foreigner as such had no rights that the Hebrew was bound to respect, except as he could enforce them with his sword. The great prophets never really got away from this point of view in principle, though they did admit foreign nations into Yahweh's plan to the extent that they might be used to chastise Israel for its sins. But as the power of Israel declined and its troubles multiplied, the idea of Yahweh rapidly expanded from that of a merely national God to that of the God of the Universe. Correspondingly, the attitude of the thinker in Israel toward the outside world also changed. As we have seen, the author of Isaiah, chapter 53, interprets the sufferings of Israel as having atoning and redemptive value for the world as a whole. The old principle of national solidarity is here expanded to the bursting point and made to include the nations of the world in general. Israel is suffering, a part for the whole, being indissolubly bound up in the divine purpose with the world at large. Such a recognition of brotherhood among the nations is past all praise and constitutes an ideal which is yet far from realization. In similar fashion, we have seen Ruth pleading for a generous attitude toward non-Jews; and Jonah going so far as to make it the binding obligation of the Hebrew people to serve as missionaries of the true God to the nations of the world, calling them to repentance that they may flee from the wrath to come. This breadth of mind and generosity of heart did not capture the imagination of the Hebrews as a whole;

but survived in their literature as an inspiration and ideal for later centuries.

222. *The outstanding characteristic of Hebrew ethics* was evidently its capacity for growth. There was little of the static and much of the dynamic in it. It is not to be supposed that the Hebrews were any less conservative than other peoples. Indeed, tradition was always a powerful force in Israel. Their life-story might be written in terms of tradition and progress. These two principles were continually at war. The fact that there was so much in the way of positive progress is due to the experiences through which the people passed. Theirs was a history of constant change of one sort and another. They came in from the nomadic life of the desert to the settled agricultural life of Canaan. The long period of settlement in the new home and of adaptation to the conditions of the new manner of life was an invaluable process of education. The long wars with Philistia, Syria, and finally Assyria, continued the educational process. Their minds were kept alert, their knowledge of the world and its peoples was broadened, and their own internal problems made more complex and difficult by these foreign wars. Then came the captivity of Northern Israel and finally the exile of Judah. Thereby many old ideas and institutions were shattered. Life had to be lived under a new set of conditions. Intimate and constant contact with the conquering people was inevitable. The life of Judah was immensely enriched by this experience. From that time on Judah and the Jews were continually under foreign control and in direct contact with foreign civilizations. Persians followed the Babylonians and Greeks followed them. By these

representatives of two rich cultures the Jews were greatly stirred and from them they learned to good purpose. Perhaps no nation upon the face of the earth has had so long and so varied a history as the Jews. Nor has any nation ever been more strategically located from the point of view of its relation to the life of the dominant nations of its time. All the life of the ancient Oriental world passed back and forth through Palestine. The people living alongside of that international road could not remain narrow and provincial in their thought and feeling. We may not be able to make precise comparative measurements of the moral and intellectual capacity of the Hebrews as compared with other peoples, but it is clear that their history was of an exceptional character and that the forces by which they were tossed about, in bringing them violently into contact with many and various phases of world-thought and life, contributed heavily to their progress in mind and heart. They were the fortunate victims of circumstances. Their course in education was not by any means an easy one; but by hard experiences they learned hard lessons and at the price of suffering they achieved a degree of moral excellence that still challenges the admiration of men.

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